



HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK

Raising the quality and quantity
of Apprenticeships

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Section one

Foreword

At the inaugural meeting of the TUC Congress in Manchester, 1868, delegates discussed how trade unions could ensure Apprenticeships remained a high quality, well paid route into secure employment.

The TUC and its affiliated unions have always been committed advocates of high quality Apprenticeships.

Representing over 6.2 million working people in Britain, the TUC speaks on behalf of many Apprentices and also for the significant number of trade union members who want to safeguard their children's futures by ensuring they will have access to high quality learning opportunities leading to secure, fairly paid employment. The TUC and wider union movement acknowledge that Apprenticeships provide young people with an excellent route into secure employment and an opportunity to earn whilst they learn. Of course, not all young people are ready for an Apprenticeship. That is why the TUC also supports other programmes to help young people such as Traineeships. It is of paramount importance that these are not just seen as an answer to youth unemployment. They must be high quality and meet the standards needed by the workplaces of today and tomorrow.

Unionlearn, the learning and services arm of the TUC, both directly and through union reps, raise the quality and quantity of Apprenticeships available to young people in various ways:

- Promoting Apprenticeships as a high quality route for young people and working with other organisations to raise awareness of the benefits that Apprenticeships bring to young people and the businesses that employ them
- Negotiating new Apprenticeship opportunities for young people, enshrining commitments from both employers, unions and providers in learning agreements which provide clarity on the objectives of an Apprenticeship programme as well as the roles and responsibilities of the employer, provider, union and apprentice
- Supporting Apprentices through mentoring, coaching, buddying and through union help in the workplace
- Campaigning to improve the quality of Apprenticeship provision, particularly through lobbying to ensure Apprentices receive at least the legal National Minimum Wage

Apprenticeships are core union business. Unionlearn supports this work through a cross-departmental approach, involving a number of different teams:

- First, through union projects which are funded via the BIS Union Learning Fund. To date ULF projects have met and surpassed all their Apprenticeship targets, highlighting the vital role trade unions have played in supporting a significant number of Apprentices in the workplace
- Second, regional teams and support workers play a crucial role promoting Apprenticeships and supporting local employers and trade unions to implement new Apprenticeship programmes
- Third, unionlearn's policy and research team interpret and analyse existing skills policies, translating these into workplace guides for union reps. Through active dissemination of these best practice policies to trade unions and their members, unionlearn raises awareness and equips trade union officers and reps with the tools to drive up the quality of skills programmes through workplace negotiations. Through joint work with a range of employers and other organisations we drive up the quality of provision for Apprentices and other young people
- Fourth, drawing on this wealth of practical experience, unionlearn helps the government and skills agencies develop policy and practice

MARY BOUSTED

CHAIR – UNIONLEARN BOARD

Section two

Union Learning Fund

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was established in 1998 to promote activity by trade unions, which would embed a learning culture in the workplace and wider community. Its primary aim is to develop the capacity of trade unions and Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) to work with employers, employees and learning providers to encourage greater take up of learning in the workplace.

In 2014-15 the Union Learning Fund supported 38 unions to deliver 34 projects across the majority of sectors at a total cost of just over £12.2 million.

A key priority for ULF projects is to raise the quality and increase the quantity of Apprenticeship and Traineeship opportunities for young people.

Unions have ULF projects, which work with employers to:

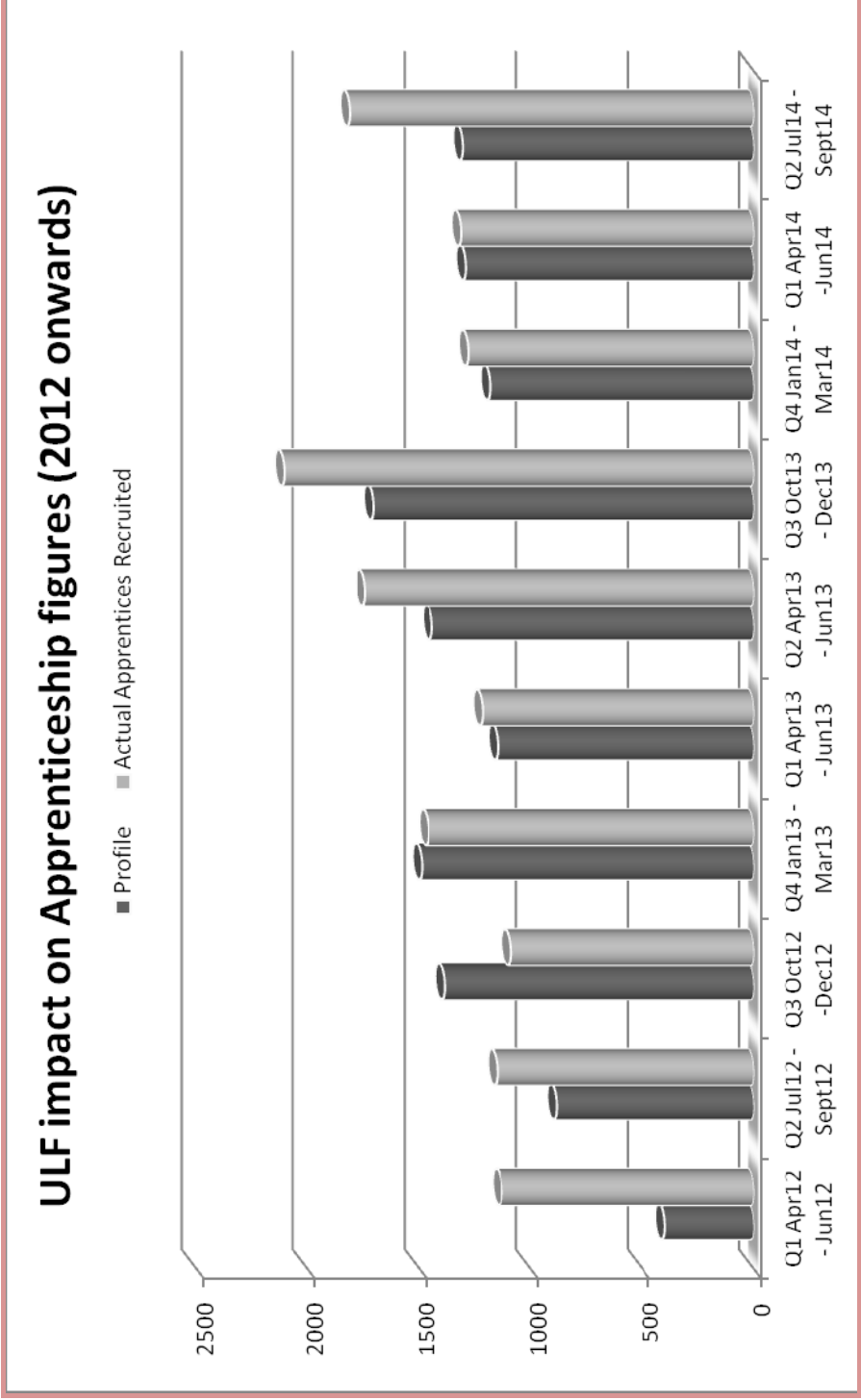
- Encourage employers to develop new Apprenticeship programmes
- Help employers and providers to improve existing programmes
- Offer support in the form of mentoring, buddying, coaching and skills development where appropriate

The ULF projects are supported by unionlearn's regional teams and the national Strategy team.

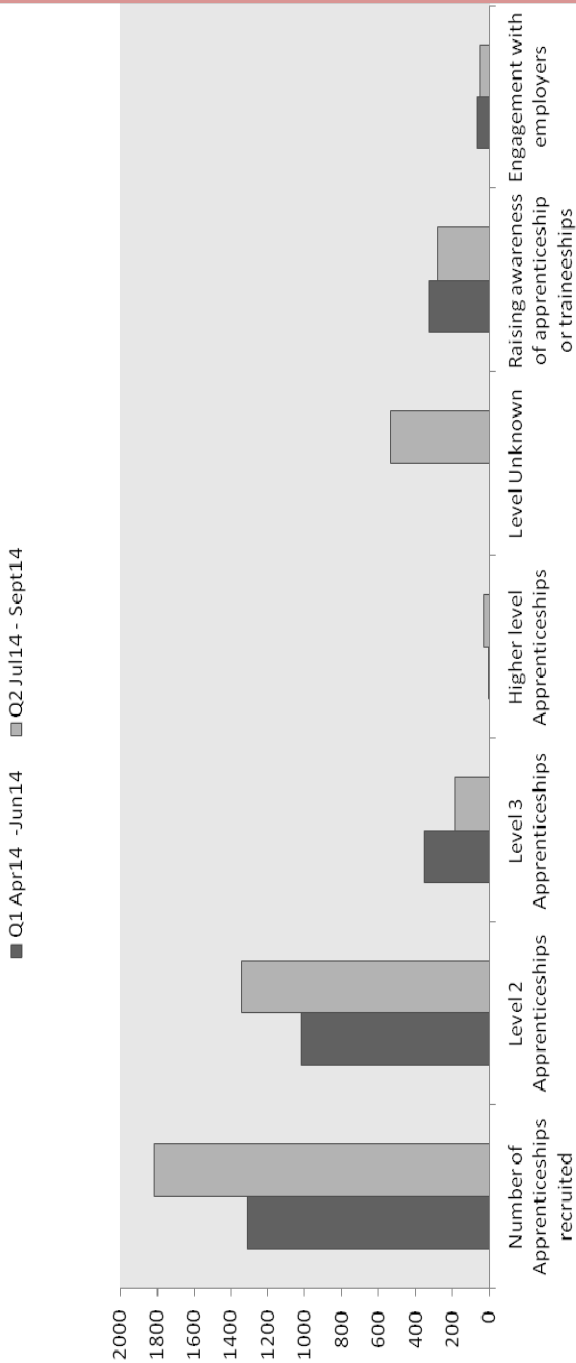
In the past two years the projects have recruited 14,318 Apprentices.

In 2014, ULF projects engaged with 115 employers to promote and discuss Apprenticeships.

The graph below highlights how unionlearn has consistently recorded Apprenticeship recruitment outcomes well above target for the last 2 years.



Apprenticeship/Traineeship Activity 2014



Below is a snapshot of some of the ULF project work on **Apprenticeships**:

TESCO

Over 670 Apprenticeships have been recruited in the eight companies where Usdaw (the shop workers union) has negotiated a joint Apprenticeship Scheme. Particular successes have been at Tesco stores in Yorkshire and Humberside and in the North East where Usdaw was also instrumental in developing a programme of support for those staff who would like to do an Apprenticeship but don't have the level of English and maths skills required. Tesco's Store Personnel Manager in Skipton says that "We want to give all staff the chance to apply for scheme so it's great to work in partnership with Usdaw to improve their skills".

NHS

Unison (the public sector union) is continuing to work in partnership with Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (CUH) to develop and promote an Apprenticeship Programme that offers a wide range of health sector career opportunities for local young people. This has enabled over 200 young people to undertake Apprenticeships in the following areas, business and administration, customer service, healthcare support services, management and IT and maintenance. The partnership is based on an Apprenticeship agreement between management and unions at the Trust. CUH Employee Development Manager believes the union's role has been vital and stressed, **"We have a very good close working relationship with our unions here at the hospital: they have been very supportive of the scheme and helped us promote the programme – having them on board has been really beneficial."**

FIRE SERVICE

The FBU's (Fire Brigades Union) ULF Project, in partnership with employers and Skills for Justice, is currently supporting over 300 employees who are undertaking apprenticeships across the Fire and Rescue Service. The Project is also working with Skills for Justice to develop a new 'community fire safety' apprenticeship that will be used across the fire industry.

TAX OFFICES

More than 90 staff at HMRC offices in Southend, Ipswich, Harwich, Peterborough, Norwich, Cambridge and Luton have enrolled on the programme since PCS (the Civil Service Union) ULRs in the area began promoting work-based Apprenticeships in 2012. The PCS ULF project has also produced detailed guidance on Apprenticeships in the Civil Service with particular reference to the new "Fast Track Apprenticeship Scheme"

and distributed this throughout the Union's networks in November 2013.

This will help the project boost the number of Apprenticeship outcomes during 2014 when recruitment to the new "Fast Track" Apprenticeship promoting work-based Apprenticeships in 2012. The PCS ULF Project has also produced detailed guidance on "Apprenticeships in the Civil Scheme" is rolled out nationally following the pilot which has been running in the North West.

ENGINEERING

The Unite (large general union) ULF Project is continuing to work with employers to promote, develop and support Apprenticeships in a variety of sectors. Overall the project has supported more than 4,000 Apprenticeships over the last two years against a profile of 3200. At Babcock Marine in Davenport, Unite and GMB's (large general union) Southern Region ULF Project have continued to work in partnership with the employer in order to promote, develop and support Apprenticeships. A further 14 new apprentices have recently started their course as a result of this work.

RAIL

RMT (Rail, Maritime and Transport union) is continuing to work in partnership with Network Rail to promote, develop and support Apprenticeship and 185 are currently being supported as a result of project activity in this area. This success is underpinned by the mentoring scheme that has been developed by the RMT project worker within Network Rail with ULRs providing a support structure for all apprentices in the company.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Unite, Unison, the GMB and UCATT (building union) are continuing to develop their learning partnership with Wolverhampton City Council which will see the City Council create over 100 new Apprenticeships over the next three years. The Council currently has 30 apprentices aged 16-18. Most of them have started on an intermediate level apprenticeship though a number are on advanced apprenticeships in trades such as electrical building services, building surveying, heating and ventilation.

BANKING

The Staff Union West Bromwich Building Society's ULF Project has made good progress on Apprenticeships. Since the project started in January last year it has helped over 50 people to start an Apprenticeship in a range of vocational subjects, at Levels 2 and 3, including business administration and customer service.

Section three

The regional unionlearn teams

The unionlearn regional teams support ULF projects, unions, providers and employers in the region to promote and create new Apprenticeship and Traineeship opportunities.

Each regional team has an “Apprenticeship lead” who, using their in depth knowledge of industrial relations in the region, identifies Apprenticeship and Traineeship opportunities, which would benefit both young people and employers.

One of the primary roles of the regional teams is to promote and raise awareness of Apprenticeships. The regional teams disseminate information to promote the benefits of Apprenticeships to unions, their officials and union reps. This information includes the practical steps that employers need to take to implement new programmes. Disseminating this information enables union officer and reps to approach the employers they engage with to confidently assert the case for taking on new Apprentices.

The regional teams also convene forums of regional representatives, including representatives from the ULF projects. These forums provide an opportunity to motivate and encourage union representatives to discuss Apprenticeships with the employers they work with. These forums are a good way for union reps to share best practice and discuss the high quality Apprenticeship programmes they have negotiated with their respective employers, which have benefitted both young people and businesses.

The regions use the tools developed by the Strategy Team effectively, to raise awareness of Apprenticeships and ensure that employers are aware of the business benefits of high quality Apprenticeships. The regional teams have been successful in using the TUC Apprenticeships Charter to start conversations with both unions and employers

Unionlearn has an excellent working relationship with the National Apprenticeship Service with many regions having strong links with the regional NAS officials, enabling them to link in employers with NAS where required.

Below is a snapshot of some of the recent regional project work on **Apprenticeships**:

Midlands

The region regularly attends networking events to promote high quality Apprenticeships and Traineeships. At a Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire Public Sector Traineeship event unionlearn promoted the benefits of high quality Traineeships and shared how unions had been involved in effective Traineeship programmes.

The region has also developed a unique partnership with West Midlands Career Service to support Apprenticeship promotion in West Midlands with a specific focus on engaging SME employers.

The Midlands region has used the TUC Apprenticeship Charter effectively to discuss Apprenticeships with a number of employers including Nottingham City Council, Leicester City Council, Lincoln County Council, Wolverhampton City Council and Wolverhampton Homes. The Charter is a useful tool for guiding preliminary discussions on Apprenticeships as well as setting out the key principles of a high quality Apprenticeship.

The region delivered a Traineeship presentation to 50 new employers, all from the tourism sector in Lincolnshire and members of the “Visit East Lincolnshire” forum.

The Region has delivered a significant number of Employee Rights & Responsibilities workshops across the region, in partnership with unions to workplace apprenticeship groups and also NEETs on employment access programs in educational organisations. The workshops have engaged with over 300 young people in the past 2 years and further demands are being supported. We have developed an accredited training program for Union Officers and Representatives to enable a broader sustainable delivery and access program.

The Midlands region continues to hold Union Officer briefing/ training sessions to build capacity and knowledge on apprenticeships and traineeships, providing the latest data, information and policies to engage and up- skill young people.

Working jointly with unions and employers unionlearn has helped to create a significant number of apprenticeship starts in sectors like, aero space, engineering, construction, customer services and local authority employment.

North West

The region offered support and guidance to Warrington Council union reps to look at how recruitment of Apprentices at the council could be improved. This discussion culminated in a learning agreement, focussed on Apprenticeships, being signed between the employer and union. The union have negotiated the terms and conditions for apprenticeships recruited to

the Council, including an agreement to pay apprentices the National minimum wage for their age, with increments to salary, which is significantly above the Apprenticeship Minimum Wage rate.

Unionlearn had a presence at a recent Skills show at Aintree Race Course. The event was sponsored by Liverpool City Region as part of an initiative between Local Authorities, NAS, and many external partners including unionlearn; Greater Merseyside connexions; and a variety of employers from different sectors. It was aimed at supporting young people into work and exhibitors were mainly offering a variety of 'have a go' activities to students from across the City Region Schools. These activities were aimed at raising young people's awareness of careers that are available in a variety of sectors.

Key to the event was providing young people, schools and parents with information on apprenticeships and career opportunities. Over 6000 individuals attended the event.

Unionlearn used the Apprenticeship speech wall for a "have a go activity". Students were asked what they wanted to do when they left school, what skills they would need to achieve their goals and whether they had considered undertaking an apprenticeship. Over 250 students took part in the activity. Apprentice employment rights materials were also distributed to students.

Further discussion with the students revealed that most students did not receive quality IAG in schools to enable them to make informed choices or decisions. Most of the students were unaware of the range of career opportunities or that they could obtain training and a qualification through apprenticeships.



Northern

The Northern Region, working with Unite, has been able to persuade Caterpillar to sign the Apprenticeship Charter, outlining their commitment to offering high quality Apprenticeships to young people. Please see the case study below for further information.

At the request of Unite North East Regional Officer the region engaged with National Apprenticeship Service to disseminate information and resources to TEXON. Managers and union reps from TEXON were briefed on the role of National Apprenticeship Service, types of apprenticeships, apprenticeship

frameworks, funding information and the new trailblazer initiatives. he Employer & Delivery Services Manager from the National Apprenticeship Service met with TEXON Management.

Several members of staff in the Northern Region are part of the North East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. This is a partnership between NAS / SFA, Government, Local Authorities and Businesses that have committed to driving forward the apprenticeship programme through local employer engagement plans. The role of the Ambassadors includes: Speaking at business events to share their good practice, being available to speak to other employers referred to them and encouraging businesses in their sector and supply chain to recruit apprentices.

South West

Unionlearn has supported the trade unions at Babcock Appledore to negotiate a high quality Traineeship (please see the case study below) which has led to young unemployed people gaining the skills needed to secure a place on the Babcock Apprenticeship programme. Unionlearn has also awarded Babcock the prestigious Quality Award for their Apprenticeship provision, recognising the proven quality of their Apprenticeship programme.

The regional team has undertaken Traineeship briefings for Wales and West Utilities GMB Convenor and North Devon Employment and Skills Board.

Southern and Eastern Region

Unionlearn coordinated a meeting between UNISON and Sarina Russo, a provider, to discuss Apprenticeship delivery with Lambeth council for staff, and how to extend this offer to members of the community in Lambeth. Sarina Russo has funding available for various apprenticeship programs. Lambeth council and Lambeth Living have agreed to offer apprenticeships to staff in partnership with UNISON.

Yorkshire

Yorkshire and the Humber Unionlearn region attended an event sponsored by Leeds Pathway www.leedspathways.org.uk, an initiative between Leeds City council and NAS, aimed at supporting young people into work. Exhibitors included, providers offering a variety of apprenticeship programmes, a number of employers and national organisations like unionlearn.

The event provided parents and young people with information on apprenticeships and careers opportunities. Over 60 exhibitors took part and the event was attended by over 1700 individuals.

Before the event unionlearn took the opportunity to engage with Unite regional and ULF representatives to identifying workplaces and geographical locations where Apprenticeship opportunities were coming up.

Unionlearn was able to distribute Apprenticeship promotional material from NAS. Unionlearn also distributed over 300 apprenticeship rights leaflets to young people. Those that wanted more information were referred to the unionlearn website.

The event enabled unionlearn representatives to network with a number of organisations and set up follow up meetings to drive the apprenticeship agenda.

Section four

The Strategy team - national policy and practice

The unionlearn national Strategy team performs a dual function in relation to Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

The first function is to analyse current policy developments and best practice youth employment programmes and to develop guides and practical tools for trade unions and their members, helping them to promote and negotiate high quality youth employment programmes.

The Apprenticeship/Traineeship work of the Strategy team is underpinned by two field workers who, utilising the practical materials and policies developed by the team, directly engage with trade unions and employers to offer tailored support to help setup Apprenticeship and Traineeship programmes. The field workers use their networking expertise to bring together stakeholders, raising the profile of Apprenticeships and Traineeships, highlighting to stakeholders the business case for recruiting young people. This model creates new youth employment programmes; a model which unionlearn is uniquely placed to deliver.

The second function of the Strategy team is to drive up the quality of Traineeships/Apprenticeship programmes, increasing the likelihood that young people will make a successful transition into secure employment. Unionlearn does this by conducting research, offering constructive policy recommendations to improve current provision and by undertaking joint work with other stakeholders to demonstrate what best practice, high quality provision looks like.

The Strategy team has developed a Traineeships and Apprenticeships Charter. Both charters stipulate the key components necessary for high quality programmes.

The Traineeships Charter emphasises the importance of programmes;

- Being voluntary
- Enabling progression into a job or Apprenticeship
- Providing adequate financial support to ensure the programme enables participation from underrepresented groups
- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to prevent the exploitation of young people

TUC Model Traineeships Charter – guidance for union representatives

This charter has been written to help unions negotiate for high quality Traineeships that safeguard against the exploitation of young people. The TUC believes that high quality Traineeships can help young people gain the skills required to undertake an Apprenticeship or find secure employment.

The sole focus of a Traineeship should be on providing a learning opportunity which supports a young person make the transition into work. In this respect it is different from an Apprenticeship where the focus is on learning and working.

Certain criteria will need to be met to ensure that Traineeships are high quality. Without effective safeguards and union involvement poor quality Traineeships could lead to the exploitation of young people or existing workers being displaced from their jobs.

If you wish to negotiate with your employer about putting in place a Traineeship programme, you may wish to consider the following points:

Job displacement

- Trainees should never be used to displace existing workers.

Content of a Traineeships Framework

- Traineeships should be designed to give young people the skills relevant to their aims and needs and the local labour market. Work experience placements must be properly planned and structured to support young people and enable progression to a job or further training
- Trainees should receive careers guidance. This will help the Trainee develop skills relevant to their future career aims and improve their chances of getting a job or further training
- Where possible Traineeships should be designed to help progression onto an Apprenticeship. Ideally, qualifications undertaken on a Traineeship should support access to an Apprenticeship
- Development of English and Maths skills, most commonly through Functional Skills will be a core element of any Traineeship. ULRs can get involved in supporting young Trainees gain these skills. ULRs have a proven track record in this area of learning
- Trainees should receive information about workplace employment rights and responsibilities. This will help Trainees make the transition into quality employment.

Guaranteed Interview for an Apprenticeship/Employment

- Where the employer has an appropriate Apprenticeship or other training vacancy or job vacancy, Trainees should be given a guaranteed interview for these opportunities at the end of their work placement
- Trainees should be given constructive feedback and offered a reference at the end of their work placement

Pay

- Where work of value to the employer is being undertaken, employers should pay Trainees. Unions will need to be vigilant and make sure that Trainees are paid at least the National Minimum Wage and where possible the rate for the job. Although Trainees are exempt from the National Minimum Wage, this should not prevent them being paid where appropriate.
- Some Trainees will be entitled to apply to the 16-19 Bursary Fund, or the Vulnerable Student Bursary to secure funding to help them undertake a Traineeship. Unions can raise awareness of the Bursary Fund to enable the most disadvantaged young people gain access to a Traineeship. For details see <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

Health and Safety of Trainees

- The Health and Safety Executive has published guidance for employers and young people on work experience placements; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/>
- The employer should carry out a risk assessment in the workplace which takes into account the particular issues that affect young people, including their lack of experience and awareness of risk. They should also consult with the union Health and Safety representatives on the risk assessment and the measures they intend to take.
- Trainees should be given sufficient training on health and safety and fire safety to ensure they are not a risk to themselves or others. Training may also need to be given to other staff on the specific risks involved in working with trainees.

Bargaining ideas for union reps

- You should consider including the development of high quality Traineeships on your existing bargaining agenda to encourage employers to help the young unemployed
- It may be useful to put in place a Traineeships Agreement between the union and employer to ensure Trainees receive a high quality

learning opportunity (please see the checklist link below)

- Negotiate for training allowances/expenses to help young people undertake a Traineeship e.g travel costs/ meal allowances etc.
- Get involved in the discussions between the employer and provider to ensure they are both signed up to this charter. It may be possible to recommend to your employer to use a provider that you already have a good relationship with, or a provider who has been awarded a unionlearn Quality Award. Providers should also support the aims of this charter
- Agree on a monitoring and reviewing schedule on how Traineeships work. This could allow you access to the Trainee to talk about trade unions and also to make sure they have a good experience in your workplace
- Union representatives, especially union learning reps, are ideally placed to act as Mentors to Trainees
- Ensure appropriate help is provided by the employer and the learning provider to those with learning differences and difficulties (for instance, dyslexia)
- It may be necessary to offer support, guidance and representation to any Trainees involved in the workplace grievance/disciplinary procedures
- All Trainees should also have a right to join the union
- If unions have concerns about the quality of training from the provider these should be raised with the provider and employer in the first instance. If necessary, complaints should then be raised with the Skills Funding Agency/Education Funding Agency/OFSTED.

The government has not made it a requirement that Trainees are paid an allowance or wage. Therefore unions can play an important role in making sure that Trainees are paid where they undertake work of a similar value to other employees.

Similarly, the Apprenticeships Charter gives useful guidance to union reps and employers who wish to discuss Apprenticeships. The Charter emphasises the importance of:

- Fair pay
- Equality of access
- Trade union involvement in the design, delivery and assessment of Apprenticeship programmes
- Mentoring and support mechanisms being in place for Apprentices

Charter for Apprenticeships

This version of the Charter was revised in 2014.

Unionlearn is committed to the vision of high quality apprenticeships as a skills development programme for the current and future workforce as we build a new, fair and sustainable economy.

These are the principles which should be followed in order to ensure that this vision is realised in a way that benefits apprentices, employers and society as a whole.

Please Note: This charter does not dilute or replace nationally or locally negotiated union agreements or frameworks.

An apprenticeship should:

1. Be a job with a productive purpose

Apprentices should have parity of terms and conditions with all other employees. All successful apprenticeships should progress to genuine employment.

2. Be paid a fair rate

Apprentice rates must at the very least conform to the statutory minimum rate and ideally to the living wage. Beyond that, the rate should reflect the job done; if an apprentice does a productive job they should be fairly paid for it or quickly progress incrementally to that point.

3. Ensure high quality training and clear individual development

Apprenticeship programmes must identify a clear programme of training that is relevant to the job and recognised in the sector. Apprentices must be given sufficient paid time off the job to study in colleges, or in suitably equipped training centres at the workplace. On the job training should be fundamental to the apprenticeship. There should be a clear system for supervision, support and mentoring, by appropriately trained work colleagues.

4. Involve the trade unions

Trade unions should play a constructive role in the development, delivery and assessment of the apprenticeship programme. Unions will support all aspects of the apprenticeship, support apprentices themselves and work with the employer and provider to ensure the quality and success of the programme.

5. Ensure Apprentices have regular access to, and support from, trade unions

The union rep should be given every opportunity to play a full role in supporting, developing and advocating for apprentices. Union representatives, especially union learning reps, are ideally placed to act as mentors to apprentices.

6. Be accessible to, and achievable by all

A good apprenticeship will include strategies to ensure that Apprenticeships are accessible to a wide demographic and diverse spread of people. Particular attention should be given to enabling people from disadvantaged groups to take up any opportunities offered and support given to complete their apprenticeship successfully.

7. Be part of, and contribute to, a Healthy and Safe environment

Employers, employees (including apprentices) and unions should work together to ensure a safe environment. Particular attention should be given to the unique needs of apprentices and young workers. Apprentices should be given full training on health and safety, including relevant legislation, and the programme should be regularly reviewed and updated.

8. A commitment from the employer to complement the workforce, not supplement it.

Apprentices should not be recruited for job substitution, but to fill genuine skills shortages and plan for future skills needs. Apprentices should be employed on the expectation of successful completion and continued employment, not used as temporary or indirect labour. Apprentices should be a key part of the workforce, not seen as a way of reducing cost.

In addition to the Charters being used by the field workers as a kite mark of good practice, they are also useful tools for union reps, union officers, and union members involved in negotiating new Apprenticeship/Traineeship programmes. The Charters have also been warmly welcomed by other organisations including employers and training providers:

“I found the TUC draft ‘Charter for Traineeships’ very useful and provides a basis for engaging with the Traineeships agenda going forward” -

Jackie Hewlett Davies of Health Education East Midlands and Chair of the Derbyshire Public Service Compact Steering Group

Feedback from unions, employers and other organisations has confirmed that the TUC Charter is a really useful tool in setting out what constitutes “high quality” provision. The Charter is not prescriptive. Many unions and employers will decide which parts of the Charter are relevant to their workplace. On a practical level the Charter signposts important considerations for discussion.

Importantly, it helps to facilitate dialogue between unions and employers who wish to discuss the implementation of youth employment programmes. Charters and guides help give union reps the confidence to raise these issues with employers.

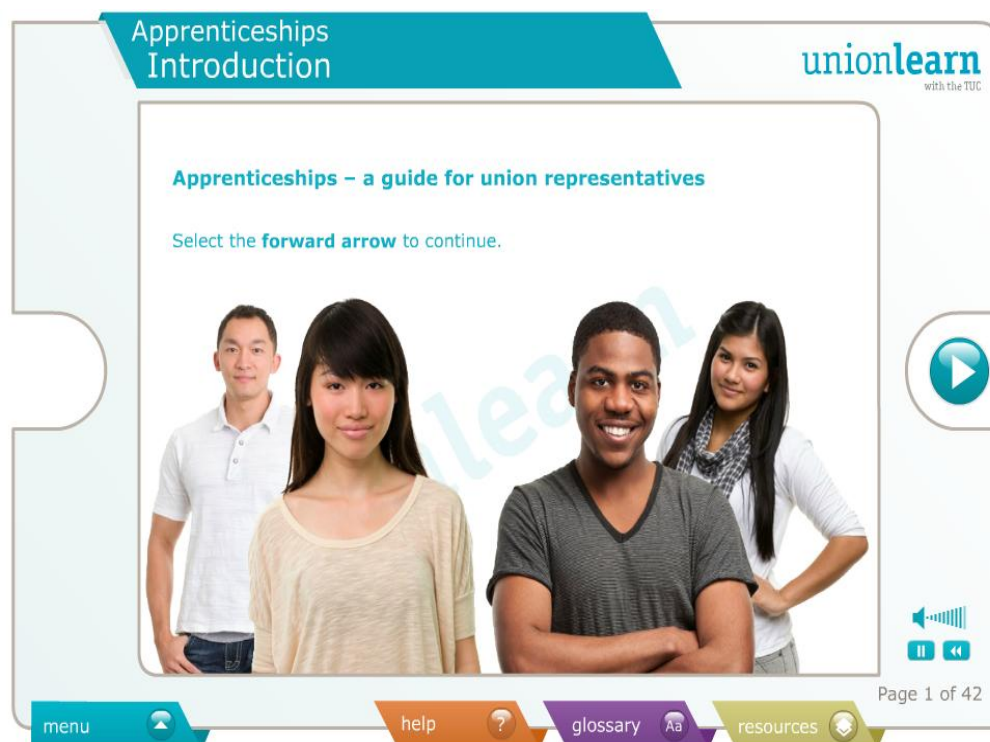
Unionlearn has disseminated the charters widely, through formal and informal networks of reps, including making use of the unionlearn website and social media strategy.

To supplement the Apprenticeship Charter, unionlearn has also developed a unionlearn Apprenticeship Quality Award. Whilst the Charter is aspirational and outlines the key principles which should govern a workplace Apprenticeships programme, the Quality Award requires the union and employer to provide evidence of their high quality Apprenticeship. Unionlearn is pleased to be awarding their first Apprenticeship Quality Award in late 2014.

Unionlearn proactively works with other organisations to promote high quality Traineeships and Apprenticeships. One example of this is the recently launched joint statement between the TUC and CBI, offering support for high quality Traineeship programmes¹. Unionlearn and the CBI published a statement which set out some of the key safeguards that employers should consider before implementing Traineeship programmes. Whilst trade union recognition is prevalent in some sectors, many employers will not have a recognised union. The joint statement helped the TUC and the CBI to reach a wide audience of employers to promote these key safeguards.

Unionlearn has recently developed an e-learning module for union reps and officers wishing to learn more about Apprenticeships.

¹ <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/news/2014/08/01/tuc-and-cbi-agree-joint-statement-traineeships>



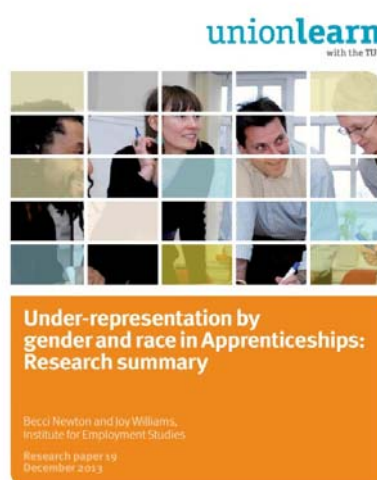
The online learning module takes roughly 30 minutes to complete, offering participants the opportunity to learn about Apprenticeships, why they are a good thing for young people and businesses and what steps unions and employers can take to introduce new Apprenticeship programmes.

“I chose the Apprenticeships e-note because I have just been selected to lead on Apprentice Recruitment and Development in my workplace. I thought the e-note was fantastically helpful and gave me a lot of additional information which I can certainly use when developing the Induction and Mentoring Plan which needs a serious overhaul. Overall, very informative and definitely worth the time taken. In fact I will be referring back to it again.” – Elizabeth Cadnam-Moore, UNISON Rep, University Hospitals Leicester

Unionlearn holds an annual “Voices of Apprentices” event which brings together unionised Apprentices from across a range of sectors to discuss issues relating to Apprentices, for example; pay, travel costs, careers guidance, health and safety and provision of training. The events are extremely useful and enable unionlearn and unions to develop policies and guidance which reflect the interests of the learners/workers. Unionlearn has developed a good relationship with NUS and will be working with them to plan and run the event in 2015. This will enable unionlearn to run

focus groups with non-unionised apprentices as well as unionised Apprentices, widening our understanding of the issues faced by young Apprentices.

Over the past year unionlearn has published a number of research reports analysing the current provision and containing some important recommendations about how to increase Apprenticeship participation amongst underrepresented groups² and how to implement mentoring schemes which are proven to drive up completion rates amongst Apprentices³.



Following the publication of these reports, unionlearn held large launch events to promote the practical findings. Over 100 participants heard about the practical steps that were needed to break down the barriers that underrepresented groups face.

The Strategy team also attends the Skills Show every year, jointly hosting a stand with unions and other organisations affiliates. The event is a unique opportunity to promote Apprenticeships, Traineeships and trade unions to young people.

The TUC is represented on numerous skills bodies and uses these forums to promote high quality Apprenticeships. The TUC, STUC, Unite and Unison all have Commissioners on the UKCES⁴ and the TUC has recently signed a skills statements⁵ with the CBI and the UKCES, highlighting the importance of Apprenticeships, Traineeships and programmes which enable young people to “earn and learn”. Trade unions are active participants in the recently established Industrial Partnerships. These partnerships have targets for Apprentices and Traineeships and unions will work with their employers to promotes these programmes and ensure that the provision offered to young people is high quality, which will help these sectors recruit and retain

² http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/sites/default/files/Under-Representation_In_Apprenticeships.pdf

³ <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20Mentoring%20Role%20Supporting%20Apprenticeships%20%284%29.pdf>

⁴ The UK Commission on Employment and Skills, the main national skills body, advising government.

⁵ <http://www.tuc.org.uk/industrial-issues/skills-policy/tuc-and-cbi-agree-joint-statement-traineeships>

highly skilled young people. The TUC and affiliates are also represented on several Apprenticeship Trailblazers. We ensure that the voice of the learner/worker is heard and that young people are offered a holistic Apprenticeship programme that meets their individual needs, the needs of the employers participating in the Trailblazer programmes, and the needs of the wider sector. This should ensure young people are given the opportunity to gain transferable skills. The TUC is also a member of BIS's recently established Equality and Diversity in Apprenticeships forum. We have helped highlight where data collection needs to improve, ensuring there is an accurate understanding of the scale of under representation in Apprenticeships.

Section five

Case studies

Trade unions are longstanding advocates of high quality Apprenticeships and have a good track record of promoting Apprenticeships as a secure route into employment for young people.

The case study below is a great example of a trade union starting a discussion with one of the employers that they work with to talk about introducing a new Apprenticeship programme.

It also highlights the practical role of unions in developing and delivering Apprenticeship programmes. A tried and tested model is to establish steering groups/advisory committees which include representation from all the key stakeholders, including the trade union. These groups can then oversee, monitor and make recommendations to improve the quality of Apprenticeship provision.

GMB and ASDA Logistics Services

Trade unions and unionlearn play a key role in encouraging employers to take on Apprentices.

GMB and unionlearn have recently begun discussions with ASDA Logistics Services, to help the 4 distribution centres in the Midlands and East Coast region take on Apprentices. GMB are the recognised trade union at these distribution centres and are uniquely placed to open dialogue with ASDA during the course of their ongoing, regular meetings. GMB have been able to persuade ASDA to introduce an Apprenticeship programme by highlighting the business case for doing so. It is expected that the Apprenticeship programme will also bring significant benefits to local young people. There is scope for looking at routes into employment for young people not ready for an apprenticeship, such as Traineeships or other pre apprenticeship training.

Trade unions emphasise the importance of developing high quality Apprenticeship frameworks. Following conversations with GMB and unionlearn, ASDA is looking to create level 3 Apprenticeships with a minimum duration of 2 years.

Where trade unions are involved in developing Apprenticeship standards, they will often seek to establish pilot programmes to test frameworks before they

can be rolled out on a larger, national programme. For example, at ASDA, each distribution centre will initially have 5 Apprentices in each distribution centre.

This enables the stakeholders to evaluate the pilot programme and apply the lessons learned to enhance the national programme before it is rolled out. To ensure the pilot programme is properly monitored and evaluated, unionlearn and GMB will sit on an Apprenticeship advisory group with ASDA to assess the progress being made. The project will engage with the union branches involved and arrange ULR training for members interested in taking up the role. The project workers brief members and reps on the importance of Apprenticeships to both the GMB and ASDA.

Often, discussions about Apprenticeships and other skills programmes between unions and employers will be formalised by a collective agreement or learning agreement. These agreements would set out the reason for the agreement, the objectives of joint skills programmes, the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and establish procedures for monitoring and assessing progress according to the objectives.

Collective agreements or learning agreements embed a joint approach towards developing high quality skills programme, including Apprenticeships. They provide structures and procedures to monitor, evaluate and improve programmes such as Apprenticeships. They set out when and how often meetings between the union and employers should take place. Unions use these meetings as an opportunity to discuss Apprenticeship programmes and to negotiate the numbers of Apprenticeship places. The example below highlights how trade unions drive up the number and quality of Apprenticeships.

EDF/Hinkley Point agreement covering the new Nuclear plant in Somerset

New construction projects provide a good opportunity to negotiate a best practice collective agreement. The rationale behind these agreements is to ensure a project runs smoothly and to time, to ensure the workforce is treated fairly and to ensure that the workforce develops the requisite skills to complete the project.

This is clearly demonstrated by the Hinkley Point agreement which was negotiated between NNB Generation Company Limited; the primary contractors; and the relevant unions (GMB, Prospect, UCATT and Unite).

This agreement reiterated the belief of the parties that the best way to run a successful project was through close social partnership, including the development of high quality skills programmes. The Common Framework

Agreement (“CFA”) stipulated that one of the key aims of the parties was to provide “innovative and effective skills training” for the workforce and to ensure that there was “a project legacy of skills and capability”.

Importantly, the agreement ensured that throughout the course of the project a “meaningful number of Apprentices” would be employed and that where appropriate a “structured and innovative programme of adult Traineeships” would be developed. Through the negotiation process, the unions were able to significantly increase the number of Apprenticeship outcomes delivered by the project.

What does close social partnership mean? The agreement sets out the role of both the union and the employer, by stating that training programmes would be “developed jointly by the parties” and that “union learning representatives will be closely engaged with this work”.

The development of high quality Apprenticeships will be overseen by a Joint Project Board and Site Joint Council, which will include senior representatives from the employer and trade unions. The Site Joint Council pays particular attention to skills and career development and is a good example of a practical forum where skills programmes can be discussed, adapted, modified and improved through a process of ongoing dialogue.

Importantly the CFA also provides union learning reps with appropriate facility time¹ to participate in the development of high quality Apprenticeship frameworks.

¹This means paid time away from normal work to carry out trade union duties

Where trade unions negotiate agreements covering workforce terms and conditions they will often seek to influence and shape skills programmes to ensure young people in the local area get the opportunity to undertake high quality Apprenticeships, which will equip them with transferable skills to pursue a future careers in the industry also benefitting the wider economy.

Merseytravel Apprenticeships

The Merseytravel Apprenticeship is another example of a union negotiated, high quality scheme which enables young Apprentices the opportunity to progress throughout the organisation.

Merseytravel has recognised the massive return on investment that running a high quality Apprenticeship brings. To ensure their Apprentices get the additional support that young people need, Merseytravel has setup a mentoring programme.

Merseytravel is a public body with responsibility for co-ordinating public transport in Merseyside. It has an annual expenditure of over £318m. As well as being an Investor in People Gold Organisation and holder of the unionlearn Quality Award, Merseytravel is a well-established employer of apprentices, both in Business Administration and in more traditional craft frameworks.

The 5 recognised unions have worked closely with management in the development of the Apprenticeships programme. Apprentices at Merseytravel have good opportunities to develop their careers once their formal Apprenticeship has ended. Through this partnership approach the Merseytravel Apprenticeship has all the hallmarks of a top quality Apprenticeship programme.

Merseytravel's apprenticeship programme has been running for over 15 years and **63% of apprentices have progressed to a career within the organisation.**

“It's great to see so many of our ex-apprentices progressing to careers within the business. It shows that the initial investment we make in our apprentice has longer term business benefits and return on investment” - Cllr Joe Hanson, Chair of People Organisational Development and Governance Delivery.

At Merseytravel, apprentices are on standard terms and conditions and a decent wage.

“The development of our apprentices is of critical importance to us. As well as 30 days' off-the-job training a year and half a day every week on their NVQ many of our apprentices have taken advantage of the learning centres to take courses like the European Computer Driving Licence and Fictional Skills” - Chris Ebsworth, Learning Business Partner

- As part of the support network for apprentices, every apprentice has a mentor, often someone who has been through the Apprenticeship themselves, to speak to and keep in touch with if there are any issues with their work placements or their learning.

Merseytravel takes on eight apprentices every two years as part of its commitment to Employment and Skills within the Liverpool City Region and raising the aspirations and beliefs of young people.

“Our apprenticeship scheme has been very successful, it gives young people sound business knowledge and career advice that they would never have thought possible before. We want to encourage more young people to look at the apprenticeship route in the future.” - Cllr Mary Rasmussen, Chair of Corporate Social Responsibility

RCN and health unions

The RCN and other health unions provide a great example of partnership working with employers, leading to high quality apprenticeship programmes, providing an alternative route into nursing for young people.

Due to union involvement, there is clear added value to the Apprenticeship programme.

With health care trusts under pressure to reduce staffing costs, hiring apprentice health care assistants has become an increasingly attractive option. However, apprentices deserve a fair deal too and RCN activists play a key role in negotiating on their behalf.

RCN worked collaboratively with other unions and the employer to secure better pay, training, terms and conditions for apprentices at University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UCLH). Union negotiations resulted in UCLH agreeing to implement Annex U of Agenda for Change, meaning apprentices are paid 75 per cent of the normal salary for their role three months into their training, rather than the £2.65 an hour minimum wage for apprentices which was first proposed.

“It was important that development of a clinical apprenticeship programme at UCLH was not a ‘race to the bottom’, but a valuable educational opportunity for applicants who might otherwise have lacked opportunity, leading to a pathway of development up to and including qualification as a nurse,” - Faith Thornhill, chair of Trust’s staff side.

The scheme at UCLH aims to provide assurance of training, quality and competence, supporting the delivery of high standards of care to patients and enabling nurses to delegate tasks safely.

A joint union publication - Supporting Apprenticeships in the Health Sector, has been developed. The RCN’s Supporting Apprentices in the Workplace guidance also provides invaluable information and advice for activists in England. The RCN has also developed a set of online resources to support health apprentices, including *First Steps for HCAs* and *The Principles of Nursing Practice*. All materials aim to give union reps the knowledge and tools to promote Apprenticeships and put forward the arguments for taking on Apprentices.



The added value of trade union involvement in Apprenticeships is clear:

- Joint working between unions, staff and employers ensures the best deal for apprentices, patients, staff, and the wider community
- Unions ensured that Apprentices must be paid 75 per cent of normal salary as early as possible
- The clinical health apprenticeship goes up to level four of the career framework, giving young people the chance to progress and plan their future careers in the sector

The case study below is an excellent example of the unique job that unions do to help develop workplace skills. At Bury Council, UNISON offered young Apprentices support and helped them to think about the skills that they needed to develop to succeed in the workplace.

Over the last couple of years Bury Council has realised the importance of recruiting young people into their organisation. The UNISON branch was able to work with the Organisational Development Advisor to ensure the Apprenticeship programme provided a wide range of talent from the local community.

In 2014 both partners agreed that an effective Equality and Diversity policy was key to ensuring that individuals recruited to the apprenticeship scheme came from a wide variety of backgrounds and had a wide range of skills. This strategy included Bury Council and UNISON working together to target specific groups during the recruitment process. They did this by advertising Apprenticeship opportunities with organisations which had strong links to under represented groups.

UNISON and Bury Council have formed a strong partnership to ensure the new apprenticeship intake is offered adequate support. Bury Council and

Bury UNISON Local Government branch recently hosted an Apprentice Induction day for the new recruits. The morning was spent discussing the relevant policies and procedures. The Chief Executive and Council leader met with the Apprentices and expressed their wish that the new apprentices become valued members of staff and that the apprentices embraced the learning culture at Bury Council to take as many learning and educational offers the council were able to provide. Personal Development was highlighted and each apprentice will now have a development work book to aid them in their work and learning journey.

The afternoon was devoted to learning and development. Bury Branch's UNISON representative for Learning, spoke about both the benefits of joining UNISON and the learning journey that the apprentices will be embarking upon.

The apprentices then took part in a Value My Skills activity; in groups they were asked to use a pack of cards which have a number of competency cards ranging from "very competent" to "underdeveloped", followed by a discussion about listing the skills they were good at and those skills which they would wish to improve.

The activity allowed them to clarify where their skill set may currently be and what further development may be needed. At the end of the session further support was offered to the apprentices and the feedback from them was positive.

Anna, the Organisational Development Advisor from Bury Council stated her support for the event: **"Thanks very much to UNISON and Unionlearn for coming to do this – we are committed to giving our apprentices every opportunity to progress in Bury council and want to help them as much as we can. The card game is a great activity."**

Mark Rowe from unionlearn commented **"The way everyone worked together to support each other demonstrates that with the right help from employers and trade unions young people can start their working lives confident that they can achieve their career aspirations"**.

Abbie, one of the finance Apprentices, found that **"using the cards gave me chance to see what I'm good at and look at things I might not do so well. It also made me think how I can work on these things in order to improve them."**



McVities and USDAW

Notwithstanding the benefits to the young person, Apprenticeships make great commercial sense. Unions are well placed to promote the business case of Apprenticeships encouraging employers to take on Apprentices.

The example below shows how trade unions can promote the business benefits of Apprenticeships and actively participate in the design of new programmes.

Following discussion between the management of McVities (Manchester) and the Trade Union USDAW, the company decided to offer apprenticeships to its existing workforce. Both parties agreed that to introduce this concept, the apprenticeship programme needed to deliver two key objectives. Firstly a business case needed to be developed to demonstrate the value of the investment in the programme and secondly that the individuals who would embark on the apprenticeship programme would be able to acquire new transferable skills.

USDAW played a significant role in the design of the new Apprenticeship programme. All the partners agreed that the best way of ensuring a successful result was to look at two specific project areas which would improve overall performance within the plant. The provider worked with unions and management to establish the key components of the two new programmes.

McVitie's and USDAW worked with the provider to ensure that the Apprenticeship provided:

- Reasonable time off to learn
- Provide a process that everyone could agree to
- Sufficient learning time to suit different skills levels and abilities

The provider and USDAW worked together and through union support the provider was able to quickly establish an understanding of the business structures, layers of management responsibility and systems the plant used.

The provider explained that in many non-unionised situations he would have difficulty in establishing those links. And even more time would be taken up by sourcing basics like a training room and resources. The plant already has a well-established and award winning learning centre run and supported by the USDAW trade union. The permanent Learning Centre provided ideal access to a range of resources with permanent IT access and a strong team of support mentors.

All 9 individuals who enrolled on the apprenticeship program had a wide range of skills. Ian Vinter who is 33 had worked for McVitie's firstly as an agency worker and then as a full time member of staff. Ian found the apprenticeship helped him improve his numeracy and literacy skills. Ian went on to complete his functional skills level 2. Following the apprenticeship programme Ian went on to study a number of IT courses improving his ICT skills, helping him to develop important transferable skills to both him and the company.

The new Apprenticeship roles equipped staff with new skills that overcame traditional barriers, resulting in cost savings for the plant and better methods of working and a group of employees who understood the workings of the plant in a more in depth, informed way.

The key partners have recognised that each apprentice developed new skills, some at different levels of attainment. But each Apprentice was able to view the plant and its processes in a different way challenging procedures and suggesting new and improved ways of working.

Jonathan Waterhouse the USDAW Learning Centre co-ordinator said: **“the apprentices worked hard and USDAW provided the space and support to ensure those individuals got the most out of the program. The initial discussions on how the apprenticeship would be delivered were challenging but in the end everyone has benefited.”**

McVitie's presently have a new cohort of apprentices on Food industry skills level 2.

DHL (for Sainsburys) - Stoke on Trent and USDAW

Creating learning opportunities for the workforce can change the culture of the workplace and help everyone to recognise the importance of workforce skills development, both for the individual and the business.

USDAW's local onsite union learning representative and team of three ULRs has won awards from unionlearn for the efforts they have put into ensuring members receive access to high quality learning provision, including functional skills Maths and English along with IT skills. DHL with support from USDAW with ULF funding supported the site to open a learning centre.

The creation of a learning culture delivered through union/employer partnership was vital and soon the union highlighted an opportunity to start Apprenticeships in logistics and warehousing. The centre has been awarded the Unionlearn Quality Award for IAG.

The apprenticeship scheme has been negotiated between the union and management and includes Business Administration, Warehousing and Storage, Waste management and Security frameworks. So far just over 50 apprentices to March 2014 have been taken on and are undergoing their apprenticeships. Newcastle U Lyme College provide the training element of each apprenticeship and USDAW have agreed with the college to provide some modules on site at the Learning Centre. The Skills for life tutor explains that prior to commencing the apprenticeship individuals are assessed to ensure the functional skills levels are adequate for the course. If not, the provider will work with each individual to ensure levels are met. Functional skills work is done through a workshop format so that individuals can work at their own pace.

The ULR team confirmed that the apprenticeship assessments are done by the college within a live work environment. The assessment is done by observations then this is followed by discussion on safety procedure, best practice, so that the individual is receiving direct input into the role they are carrying out. The assessment process is discussed at the workplace learning committee, which involves the union, management and provider, meaning all stakeholders decide what the final Apprenticeship standard should look like.

Ruth Brown HR Business Partner said: **'the USDAW ULR team are a fantastic group of people and an absolute credit to the site and we would not have the learning success without John and his team'.**

Julia Baldwin from USDAW's ULF project said: **'the Apprenticeship programme has been so successful that discussion is underway with USDAW, with unionlearn support, to open negotiations with other Sainsbury's distribution sites, thereby giving more people the opportunity to have recognised qualifications and skills and giving the employer access to a well-trained dedicated workforce'.**

MerseyCare NHS Trust and POA Learning

Trade unions work with employers to improve existing schemes, making sure that Apprentices receive a high quality learning experience.

Negotiations between Mersey Care NHS Trust and POA Learning has led to the enhancement of the existing Apprenticeship programme at the hospital.

Mersey Care NHS Trust and POA Learning have benefited from a Union Learning Fund project since 2005. The project has developed over the years culminating with a new partnership approach to learning development and apprenticeship provision in the Trust.

The ULF project and joint approach to developing high quality learning programmes for the workforce changed the learning culture at Mersey Care NHS Trust, leading to an increased role for trade unions in the learning agenda. The Apprenticeship programme was put together to offer existing staff and new entrants a life changing opportunity via a high quality learning pathway. The programme offered Mersey Care an opportunity to develop its own staff and to create fantastic career paths within the Trust. The organisational investment in apprenticeships also enables this offer to be extended to external prospective employees who are looking for a career within the Health sector to fill potential vacancies within the Trust with full terms and conditions recognised by agenda for change.

Importantly, it was agreed that staff coming into the Trust in bands 1-4 were able to utilise the Apprenticeship programmes to support their aspirations to various roles and opportunities within the NHS.

The ULF project has also seen the development of the 'The Union Learning Zone', which is an actual centre, fully equipped to support all learners. This has helped to break down barriers to learning as employees have been supported, encouraged and engaged through organisational change, including the coaching, advising and supporting of Apprentices.

Apprenticeships were promoted throughout the trust as all departments can benefit from developing existing staff through the programme.

As an organisation, vacancies were identified and advertised through National Health Service (NHS) and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) websites.

Approximately 250 Apprenticeships have been delivered across the Trust with the most common frameworks being Health and Social Care, Business Administration, Customer Service, Healthcare Assistant Support and Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM).

The Union Learning Zone in partnership with the learning and development department is constantly moving to accommodate organisational change, to reflect educational standards and be mindful of the need to support union structures within the partnership. The centre holds the matrix standard for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), has a Level 2 Ofsted grade, and works with awarding bodies such as OCR and City & Guilds to create a solid portfolio of education and learning.

Due to the Union Learning Fund success, the partnership has been able to develop the learning centre with these educational awarding bodies. The successful achievement of centre status means that all apprenticeships training is completed in house which enables the organisational element, its ethos and values to be embedded throughout the training programmes.

This social partnership approach to learning encouraged staff to talk and communicate openly with each other as learners on equal platforms. This has encouraged participation and social interaction and also enabled an ideal starting point for apprenticeships. By adding further partners such as Skill for Health, the partnership was then able to offer various apprenticeships to existing employees.

The ULF project and additional union support that is in place has encouraged and supported the development of the social partnership learning agenda beyond Mersey Care. These areas included links to the centre within Her Majesty's Prison Services (HMPS) and the wider local communities.

“The ULF project is a unique and invaluable asset to Mersey Care NHS Trust, this partnership enables us to truly maximise available resources, and think creatively to provide a comprehensive range of high quality support for our staff. The Apprenticeship programmes are a key component of Mersey Cares’ workforce plans and the ULF has underpinned the comprehensiveness and quality of the programmes delivered.” - Jo Davidson - Head of Organisational Effectiveness and Development Mersey Care

“The apprenticeship route was the most natural move forward for recruiting quality staff. The pastoral organisational element that is embedded within the apprenticeship framework is like a value based learning programme and for us this was the natural progression to take. It is a great experience when you support the empowerment of individuals to make their own decisions and seize the opportunities.” - Lorraine Lewis
Regional Union Learn Manager

Pirelli and Unite

Trade unions are well placed to point out when aspects of an existing Apprenticeship programme need to be improved. Apprentices will often be union members, meaning that unions get to hear firsthand the Apprentices' experiences of a programme.

Trade unions can be the catalyst for change where existing programmes fall short of the high quality standards required by most employers.

Discussions between Unite and Pirelli about their Apprenticeship programme, revealed some issues around the quality of an apprenticeship scheme.

Pirelli provided excellent opportunities for apprentices, providing good pay and terms and conditions for Apprentices. Apprentices were mentored in the workplace and Pirelli's strong partnership with Unite meant that the programme was regularly reviewed and monitored. During one discussion it became apparent that the provider delivery model was not delivering the high standards of training that the company had come to expect from a holistic, well rounded apprenticeship standard. The trade unions having helped identify this as an issue, committed to seek advice from various supporting bodies to help rectify the situation to ensure the provider delivery enabled Pirelli to meet the global skills standards required in a competitive market.

Unite is liaising with the relevant Sector Skills Councils to try and resolve the issues with the current provider.

Caterpillar and Unite

Trade unions have used the TUC Apprenticeship Charter as a way of opening and then guiding dialogue with employers about Apprenticeship programmes. Trade unions and employers sign up to the Charter as a statement of intent. Where employers and unions have signed up to the Apprenticeship Charter, Apprentices will be involved in a programme which is guided by principles which will ensure they receive a high quality learning experience.

The Northern Region unionlearn has been supporting Caterpillar Peterlee and the recognised union, Unite, for several years, helping to entrench the learning agenda and by promoting the importance of the health and wellbeing of the workforce. Supporting the Apprenticeship agenda has been a fundamental part of that work. A partnership approach has led to continual improvements in the quality of the Caterpillar Apprenticeship programme.

In November 2014, the company and the union felt the time was right to rubber stamp the high quality programme and effective partnership model, by signing the unionlearn Apprenticeship Charter. The Charter sets out the key components of a high quality Apprenticeship and is an indicator that young people will receive a high quality learning experience.

The charter contains key provisions relating to fair pay, trade union involvement in the programme and commitments to ensure young people receive high quality training. It is also a commitment from both the employer, union and unionlearn that there will be an ongoing drive to continually monitor and improve the quality of the programme.



Caterpillar and Unite signing the Apprenticeship Charter.

Ken Gyles, unionlearn, Creg Robson, learning centre manager at Caterpillar, Rennie Simpson, Unite Convenor and Mark Rowe, unionlearn.

Ken Gyles, senior Union Support Officer said **“I was delighted that Caterpillar Peterlee committed to the signing of the apprentice charter. Unite and management, working together, are always developing better ways to ensure that apprentices get quality training at the Peterlee depot. This will guarantee that apprentices in Peterlee get the structure and support to enable Caterpillar to grow and train young adults for the future of their workplace”**

Rennie Simpson, Unite convenor at Peterlee said **“The union were actively involved in the re-introduction of apprenticeships at Caterpillar Peterlee. We believe that the Apprentice Charter formulated by the TUC is an excellent guideline to achieve our aims of supporting our apprentices in training, fair treatment and continuous improvement in moving forward.”**

Chris Fairs, HR Manager at Caterpillar, said **“We have been working with Unite over a number of years at Caterpillar Peterlee to develop an apprentice programme that is credible and meets our business requirements; we believe that the apprentice charter supports the work that we have been doing.”**

ATL and UCU – raising awareness

Trade unions play a key role raising awareness of high quality youth employment provision, amongst key stakeholders.

Trade unions have demonstrated that they can take an innovative approach to developing high quality Traineeship programmes (please see the Stephenson College example below, where the Traineeship programme was linked to local job vacancies). They take a forward thinking approach by linking Traineeships and Apprenticeships to future labour market vacancies.

Both Traineeships and Apprenticeships should enable progression to sustainable employment. By linking in LEPs and their LMI knowledge, to those delivering Traineeships and Apprenticeships, there is an increased likelihood that young people undertaking these programmes will make the transition to secure employment.

ATL’s national ULF project is working with unionlearn to develop their project, raising awareness, amongst their members, of Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

ATL’s membership includes college lecturers and practitioners. This means ATL is able to raise awareness of high quality programmes to the people who will be responsible for delivering the provision.

ATL is delivering awareness raising seminars at 10 colleges. Unionlearn will support these events and help ATL link the seminars in to strategic areas of likely growth. This will be achieved by using unionlearn’s links with the local LEPs to identify emerging opportunities in local labour markets. Unionlearn will be helping ATL secure key note speakers, either from employers or unions from the relevant sector.

ATL has agreed to work jointly with GMB to deliver these seminars to deliver a CPD event to 200 ATL members so as enabling them to get a better understanding of why unions support high quality apprenticeships

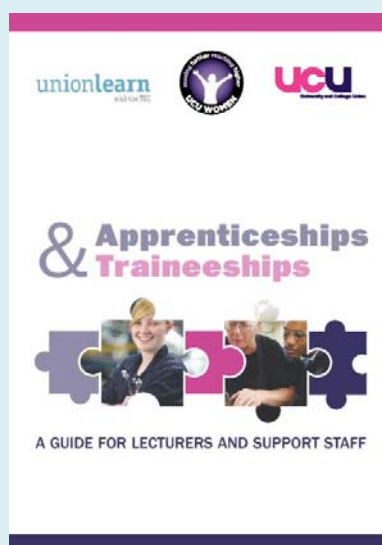
and how union reps will be involved in supporting Traineeships. This will give practitioners a better understanding of how Traineeships will work in an industrial context.

This partnership approach will also enable employers that GMB works with to become more involved on skill boards at colleges, facilitating increased employer involvement in developing local skills needs.

The University and College Union, which also has members who are FE lecturers and trainers, has developed a practical resource which will be disseminated to their members.

The guide outlines the Apprenticeship and Traineeship programmes, the legal requirements that must be complied with and the compulsory and flexible elements of both programmes.

The guide has a strong focus on how to widen access, to both Traineeships and Apprenticeships, to underrepresented groups. This includes practical steps that employers and providers can take to make these programmes more inclusive, as well as providing links to organisations that support underrepresented groups get into employment.



Youth Employment Networking Event – unionlearn South West region

Unionlearn plays a key role, bringing together stakeholders, raising awareness and identifying new opportunities for high quality Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

Unionlearn and Weston College hosted a joint event for unions and employers in the South West to primarily look at how unions and employers can work in partnership to develop high quality Apprenticeships and Traineeships which ensure that young people are benefiting from high quality learning and training experiences within unionised companies in this region. Weston College provided an up to date picture of FE funding and explained their apprentices and trainee programmes of work.

The event was attended by 7 trade unions from the region- Unite, PCS, Usdaw, GMB, CWU, RMT and Unison and several employers. TUC tutors from Weston College who train union reps and ULRs all over the South West were also in attendance, together with the Construction Workforce Development Manager from Hinkley Point C.

Discussions around Youth Employment were led by the TUC National Apprenticeship Officers who provided information on the TUC Apprenticeship and Traineeship Charters and gave good practice examples of work taking place in other companies nationally, including Union Reps mentoring trainees and apprentices and how many employers, with the support of their recognised unions, are ensuring that trainees are given financial assistance to cover their travel expenses and meals whilst gaining experience in their workplaces.

Unionlearn in the South West and the National TUC Apprenticeship team has arranged a further event in early 2015, but this time for employers. The aim will be to discuss any concerns or reluctance employers may have with regard to engaging with and accepting Apprenticeships into their organisations

Section six

Traineeships

Unionlearn has been helping trade unions to setup up Traineeship programmes.

As with Apprenticeships, the focus of trade unions has been on ensuring that young people receive a **high quality** learning opportunity.

Using the TUC Traineeships Charter as a basis for discussions, unions have been able to negotiate schemes that; enable guaranteed progression to Apprenticeships, offer sufficient financial support to Trainees, ensure that Trainees are in the workplace to learn rather than primarily for work and in some cases securing the Living Wage for Trainees.

Babcock, Unite and GMB

Progression should be integral to any Traineeship. A young person undertaking a Traineeship should have an opportunity to progress into secure employment, an Apprenticeship or further study.

The Traineeship programme at Babcock Appledore, which was negotiated with the recognised unions, is a good example of this.

Unite and GMB have been involved in all negotiations relating to the Traineeship Programme.

The traditional way skilled people are brought into the shipbuilding industry is through the apprenticeship route, these opportunities for young people will continue as a well proven method to provide the workforce required for increasingly complex build projects as well as the pipeline for talent that will supply the technicians, designers and managers that will take the industry forward.

At Babcock Appledore we want to make the transition from school to industry via apprenticeships seamless by the introduction of Traineeships. We have for some years engaged with both primary and secondary schools to provide an awareness of what heavy engineering looks like, however young people are still unsure as to whether a career in engineering is for them; this is reflected in the average age of applicants to the apprenticeship scheme, often people over the age of 23 who have jobbed around and come to realise the exciting opportunities that exist in marine engineering, this however is often too late to utilise government funding streams for apprenticeships.

Such issues have been recognised by the TUC and the CBI in their joint statement of support for Traineeships and the Babcock Appledore scheme has been designed around the TUC Charter for Traineeships.

By working with Petroc (training provider) to provide Traineeships that will deliver both the functional skills required for eligibility to apply for a Babcock Apprenticeship and valuable work experience over an eight week period, the young person can now make an informed decision as to whether a career in shipbuilding is for them. Working alongside experienced craftspersons the trainees will see first-hand a ship under construction and that craftsperson will also give valuable insight into the trainee's suitability to the trade. With Petroc providing the underpinning technical knowledge and functional skills coupled with our skilled workforce, with the support of Trade Union representatives who will be involved at the outset, we believe that this partnership will be the perfect introduction to one of our nation's proudest industries.

Although the trainees will not receive any "wages", the unions and employer are currently in negotiations to make sure the trainees will receive comparable allowances, i.e. to cover transport etc, as our apprentices.

Following the work placement all Trainees are guaranteed an Apprenticeship providing they pass the functional skills test (which is an entry requirement for all prospective Apprentices).

The relevant trade unions will play a key role in the Traineeship programme. Union reps will participate in the induction process. Trainees will be supported by ULRs in the workplace and importantly, Health and Safety Reps. In addition to the workplace unions, unionlearn is represented on the Babcock Appledore Joint Skills Steering Group, and made both the employer and Trade Unions aware of the TUC Charter for Traineeships.

NASS and Northern Racing College – Traineeships

The union is taking a hands-on approach with the Traineeships programme that they have negotiated with the Northern Racing College. NASS will be involved in directly supporting young people on their work placements, undertaking specialist qualifications to ensure Trainees get the help and support that they need.

In the last couple of months the Northern Racing College has looked to change their course programme to include the final six weeks of the students eighteen week course as a traineeship within the racing industry. NASS and the NRC have come together to help oversee and make sure that the traineeships are high quality and excellent for both employee and employer. The college

has found this will be the best way to help introduce students into the work place rather than throwing them straight into an apprenticeship if they are not quite ready for that and is the best way to help bridge the gap between the both. NASS are keen to make sure these work as with lack of young people coming into our industry through data from the British Horse Racing Authority we feel that working with the young people and the employers we can help train and then retain people within the racing industry.

People already on traineeships have found them very rewarding along with the employer who have also found it bridges the gap and helps to give staff a helping hand before taking up the full apprenticeship. The Employers are expected to give the staff member on a traineeship bed and board, contributing towards the experience.

NASS is also currently in the process of setting up a course to train mentors so each yard will have a nominated person that will oversee the traineeship and help each learner progress through the traineeship. East Riding College will be delivering the courses, an NCFE qualification in mentoring and an Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) qualification in team leading.

The qualifications will be launched at a special event in January at Malton, North Yorkshire, when the union and employers hope to identify potential mentors in as many yards as possible: the aim is to ensure each yard has a nominated person who will oversee the traineeship and help each learner progress through the programme.

Racehorse Trainer/Employer Malcolm Jefferson says **“As employers we appreciate that people progress at different rates and feel that the traineeships will enable some young people who may be over faced to start, with to develop at their own pace and become valued employees.”**

Dawn Goodfellow the Director of the NRC says **“The Northern Racing College feel that traineeships offer the opportunity for many more youngsters to go into the horseracing industry because of the additional support that it enables us, as training providers, to give them. We are very excited about working with NASS and its members to ensure that our students get the best possible start to their careers.”**

NASS Chief Executive George McGrath says **“NASS have already successfully launched Union Learn courses in Newmarket, Epsom and Lambourn. We are very excited at the prospect of linking up with the Northern Racing collage to provide a co-ordinated approach to the Traineeships of the young recruits to British racing.**

We feel there is huge desire within the industry to help what can often be a vulnerable and poorly educated workforce progress in their working lives and therefore enriching society.”

GMB, unionlearn and Stephenson College

Unionlearn has established productive relationships with many providers across England. Colleges and employers approach unionlearn field workers for advice on developing and promoting high quality skills programmes. Colleges, in particular, work with unionlearn field workers to generate interest in their Apprenticeships and Traineeship programmes, often in a particular sector, by using unionlearn's networks of unions and employers.

The example below demonstrates how unionlearn improves the sustainability of skills programmes. Trade union involvement from the outset ensures that Apprenticeships and Traineeships are developed to meet the needs of both young people and businesses. Also, trade unions play a key role in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programmes, helping to make improvements whilst the programmes are underway.

In early 2014, Stephenson College were looking to develop a Traineeship programme for young unemployed people in Leicestershire, who weren't ready to begin an Apprenticeship. The college approached a unionlearn field worker to help them develop a programme. The field worker was able to suggest improvements to the training element of the programme.

Due to their close links to the region and local knowledge of the local labour market, they were able to make helpful suggestions about focussing the Traineeship on the logistics sector. The Midlands region has a large logistics hub with plenty of job opportunities for young people.

Unionlearn was able to bring in the relevant trade union to ensure that the Traineeship met the needs of the local logistics employers and that important safeguards were put in place to ensure young people received a high quality learning experience.

GMB ensured that young people received comprehensive health and safety briefings and that they received adequate expenses to ensure that they could participate fully in the Traineeship. This important negotiation led to increased participation amongst under-represented groups in the local area.

GMB has also agreed to participate in the induction process for young Trainees, meaning that if the Trainees experience any problems or concerns during the work experience element of the Traineeship they have someone to turn to for help. This also gave GMB increased opportunities to engage with young people. GMB is also represented on the steering group, enabling them to identify any problems which emerge, early on.

URTU and Clipper Logistics

The United Road and Transport Union has helped to develop a programme for local young people looking for employment in the logistics sector. URTU has demonstrated the importance of tailoring a youth employment programme to ensure that it meets the needs of the young person and the sector.

URTU has collaborated with Clipper Logistics to develop a youth employment programme, the “Clipper Academy”, for local unemployed young people. The programme’s aim and contents is primarily focussed on helping young people develop a raft of relevant transferable skills.

Young people are given the opportunity to develop a range of skills including; CIEH L2 Award in Health and Safety, CIEH Manual Handling, Award in Industrial Environmental Awareness (including hazardous materials), Functional Maths and English, Employment Rights and Responsibilities and a forklift truck driving qualification.

This tailored programme differs from other Traineeships, in that young people will only undertake one week’s experience, in the final week of the programme. This will enable the young people to put into practice some of the skills they have learnt on the preceding 5 weeks of the course. It is also a good example of how the union is safeguarding young people by ensuring a work placement is a learning experience, rather than a job. It also highlights the need to develop programmes in line with the nature of work undertaken in a specific sector. URTU felt that a one week duration placement was appropriate for the logistics sector.

The programme has an excellent transition rate with 90% of participants in the Academy, progressing into employment with Clipper Logistics. These young people are enrolled onto an NVQ course in either “plant operations” or “performing manufacturing operations”. Following completion of their NVQ, the young person is then enrolled onto an Apprenticeship in either administration or warehousing and storage. Progression is integral to the Clipper Academy programme.

URTU strongly support the programme and have a slot on the Academy programme to work with the young people and let them know how the union can offer further support and help.

“I believe this is something that not only does our Union endorse, having been intrinsically involved in the groundwork for the past couple of years, with our work with 'Skills for Logistics', but which highlights the potential opportunity this presents for our Union for organising” - Robert Monks, General Secretary of URTU

UFS and Zurich

Trade unions will seek to negotiate above and beyond the minimum requirements set out in the government's Traineeship framework. The example below highlights how this can bring significant benefits for the young participants, including the Living Wage.

Trade unions have shown they can negotiate and support high quality training programmes for young people, including Traineeships.

Through long standing discussions with the UFS Learning project, Zurich has developed a skills programme for young people which goes above and beyond the core Traineeship framework to implement a programme, which should be regarded as best practice.

Young unemployed people up to the age of 24 with or without qualifications are enrolled onto a 6 month programme. The participants are referred to the programme via local job centres.

Zurich has developed a 6 month training course for the young person, which includes modules designed to improve a young person's employability skills.

Significantly, whilst the young people undertake their training they are paid the living wage, a rate of £7.65

Trade unions have been calling for payments such as these as it recognises the Trainees' contribution during their 6 month programme, provides them with funds to travel to their placements and participate in working life and also ensures a high level of commitment from the young person, increasing the likelihood of completion of the programme.

The statistics on participants' progression support this. Of the six candidates on the pilot project, five still remain with Zurich. Zurich was also able to take a flexible approach when one young person expressed an interest to switch to another part of the organisation and gain some experience and skills in information, communication and technology. A further three have been recruited in Birmingham and Zurich is looking to recruit further in Farnborough in early 2015.

The Zurich/UFS programme does not draw upon Traineeship funding and has been adopted as part of Zurich's corporate responsibility strategy.

Alan Wood, General Secretary of UFS says **'increasing work skills of those in work and those searching for it has been a cornerstone of our philosophy. It is encouraging to work with an employer that is willing to engage with its staff and those not yet employed to try and achieve this'**



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