

Senedd Cymru

Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig

Ymchwiliad: Llwybrau prentisiaeth

Cyf: AP09

Ymateb gan: WeGetDesign

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Welsh Parliament

Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

Inquiry: Apprenticeship pathways

Ref: AP09

Evidence from: WeGetDesign



Dear Members of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee,

I am writing to submit our views on the Welsh Government's [Inquiry into Apprenticeship Pathways](#), particularly concerning software training, recruitment challenges, and the need for sustainable funding models to support technical apprenticeships.

As a company that has actively invested in Welsh apprenticeships, we have first-hand experience of both the benefits and challenges associated with the current system. We welcome this opportunity to provide feedback and advocate for solutions that will strengthen the apprenticeship pathway for businesses and learners alike.

The Need for a Centralised Apprenticeship Recruitment Model

80% of small firms in Wales have struggled to recruit due to skills shortages, and only 17% of employers currently offer apprenticeships.

A centralised apprenticeship recruitment drive, **similar to UCAS for university applications**, would simplify the process, making it easier for SMEs to engage with apprenticeships. This would increase employer participation and improve accessibility for learners, particularly in high-demand sectors such as software development.

Educating Businesses on Cost Savings and ROI of Apprenticeships

Many businesses hesitate to take on apprentices due to upfront costs and the initial 6-12 month period before a technical apprentice can contribute commercially.

A targeted employer education programme highlighting long-term **productivity gains, tax incentives**, and the economic impact of upskilling staff through apprenticeships. Increasing employer awareness will encourage greater participation, helping to close the digital and technical skills gap in Wales.

Reintroducing and Expanding Training Grants for Employers

In 2021, we hired 5-6 apprentices with the support of a training grant. When this funding was removed, our ability to take on apprentices was significantly reduced.

Reinstate targeted grants to offset initial costs for employers hiring apprentices in technical fields. Introduce development grants to support apprentices' continuous training, particularly in high-growth sectors such as software development, AI, and



cybersecurity. This approach will increase apprenticeship uptake and help businesses invest in skilled workers, leading to higher retention rates and economic growth.

Using Welsh Apprenticeship Degree Apprenticeship in line with Cardiff University

As you may be aware, [Cardiff University is planning 400 job cuts](#), citing financial pressures. This situation presents an opportunity to rethink how higher education institutions engage with apprenticeships and ensure a more cost-effective, employer-led approach that benefits both students and businesses.

In 2017, I approached Cardiff University to train employees through the Adult learning courses, mainly around web technologies such as JavaScript, HTML, PHP. I did this course personally in 2005 and found it very fruitful. But at the time Cardiff University advised they pulled the course due to lack of tutors. This is what led us to explore apprenticeships.

Proposed Affordable Solution:

Leverage Cardiff University's existing infrastructure to expand degree-equivalent apprenticeships in high-growth sectors like software development, AI, and engineering. Rather than cutting courses, the university could shift its model to provide vocational training pathways, ensuring more employment-focused education. A Sustainable Alternative to Degree Cuts – Instead of eliminating university jobs, Cardiff could pivot towards degree apprenticeships, retaining staff while providing cost-effective vocational education aligned with industry needs.

Establish a University-Industry Skills Partnership, where local businesses and Cardiff University co-fund apprenticeship training. Businesses can offset training costs through tax incentives or direct investment, while the university benefits from steady revenue streams without relying solely on tuition fees. Future-Proofing Welsh Industry – By focusing on high-growth areas like software development, AI, and advanced manufacturing, Wales can fill critical skill gaps while ensuring graduates are employment-ready upon completion.

This affordable, employer-driven model would allow universities to play a greater role in skills development, reducing reliance on government funding while creating a strong, long-term pipeline of Welsh talent.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals further and collaborate on developing a sustainable future for apprenticeships in Wales.



Best regards,

Omar

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Omar Moulani
Founder & Managing Director

