

Senedd Cymru

Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig

Ymchwiliad: Llwybrau prentisiaeth

Cyf: AP11

Ymateb gan: Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe

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Welsh Parliament

Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

Inquiry: Apprenticeship pathways

Ref: AP11

Evidence from: Swansea Bay University Health Board



- **Pathways between apprenticeship levels:**

This has been a success in a number of areas within Swansea Bay Health Board, including our Digital Services team where they use apprenticeships as part of their recruitment plan and successful apprentices progress into band 4 roles.

The extent to which there are challenges in mapping out career routes through the different apprenticeship levels, such as from a junior apprenticeship to a degree apprenticeship. Whether this is more difficult in some careers/sectors than others.

- Lack of apprenticeship frameworks at L4 and L5 to allow for career pathways; this is especially evident in nursing, with the Nurse Associate role under review in Wales
- Role of Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) is focussed on clinical apprenticeships when we as Apprentice Leads cover so many more frameworks and staff groups; non-clinical Health Care Support Workers do not get access to HEIW funding in the same way as clinical staff
 - HEIW are funding individual Agored units / qualifications when organisations can access apprenticeships through the levy payments they are making
- Development of better links between content of traditional qualifications and apprenticeships so that people are able to progress from GCSEs / A Level to L4 / 5 apprenticeships
- Recognition that those within the workplace completing L3 / 4 apprenticeships are able to apply for University based courses which are required for registration in most clinical roles.
- Not all providers offer junior apprenticeships within our area and for those that's do we find the qualification quite rigid and not linked to our areas of need; Welsh Government may consider expanding the range of these and changing the qualifications offered within them to help as alternative to traditional education; this may change with the introduction of the new curriculum in Wales

- **Economy:** The extent to which apprenticeship pathways support the needs of Welsh businesses and contribute to filling skills gaps in the Welsh economy.

- Within SBU apprenticeships have been used to widen access to people in the local communities that we serve being able to have the opportunity to start their career within the NHS
- Apprenticeships are also a valuable cost saving tool for organisations with a lower pay level whilst on the apprenticeship
- They give the required skills and experience to those that are enrolled on frameworks and recruited into posts; these qualifications are regularly reviewed and updated
- More awareness of skills needed and how apprenticeships can offer these

- More recognition needed that apprenticeship can be for all ages to facilitate a career change and help with large scale redundancies, e.g. TATA Steel within our local community
 - SBU aims to be an anchor organisation and attract, recruit and retain staff from our local communities and apprenticeships are key in achieving that
- **Employers:** The engagement of employers in facilitating these pathways and attracting apprentices. Is specific support needed for micro, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to engage with the apprenticeship programme.
 - SBU is a macro organisation but we work with our training providers to share our experiences of recruiting and using apprenticeships with others
 - SBU is a living wage employer, a decision made to compete in the local labour market and attract the best candidates; this has seen a change in the type of applicant and an improvement in retention for those progressing to permanent employment after the apprenticeship
 - When we attend careers fairs and apprentice events we promote the career pathways available in different sectors as an alternative to FE / HE
 - More virtual / digital networking and sharing best practice
 - Consider the development of jointly employed apprenticeships in hard to recruit areas, e.g. Health and Social Care, Engineering
- **Information about apprenticeships:** Good practice between careers services, schools, colleges and employers in terms of promoting apprenticeships and the provision of meaningful work experience.
 - We work extremely closely with our training provider partners and local careers services to promote the links between work experience and apprenticeships and encourage departments to recruit differently
 - We have had success in students accessing work experience and then progressing to apprenticeships in Facilities Management and Digital Services
 - We have also had success with previous vocational trainees on our long term unemployment programme move into apprenticeships
 - More work needed to be done from a younger age in schools on apprenticeship routes and pathways and also with parents / carers
 - SBU's population health strategy has an aim to 'create fair employment and good work for all' and to 'create healthy and sustainable places and communities'; understanding that fair work contributes to a well-being economy, drives prosperity, is environmentally sound and helps everyone realise their potential
- **Equity of support and access for learners:** The extent to which apprenticeship pathways are made open to all young people in Wales and any barriers facing specific demographic groups or geographical areas.
 - SBU has developed a programme to widen access to recruitment, career information and work experience by working with local community groups,

listening to their concerns and matching these to opportunities that fit with our organisational needs

- An example of this has been a group of four students from Gower College Swansea's Independent Living Skills programme who completed a long term work experience programme within our Support Services department; after recognition from the line managers they successfully applied for and are completing a L2 apprenticeship
- More could be done to record and monitor the apprenticeship take up in different areas and with specific groups; we hold information internally on those that have been recruited but are unsure as to where they heard about the opportunities
- We are also working with local community groups to widen access and listen to their concerns and barriers so that we can address these
- With existing staff enrolled on apprenticeships we hold equalities data if they have chose to share it

- **The Welsh Government's role:** How policies support apprenticeship pathways and any barriers that need addressing in that regard. The role of the Welsh Government, Regional Skills Partnerships and other stakeholders in identifying and communicating economic and skills needs to inform apprenticeship frameworks and the delivery of qualifications.
 - More increased recognition that the public sector so not have the resources to offer a number of the services and opportunities that the private sector do
 - We tend to focus our attention on hard to recruit roles and the alternatives that are available from the apprenticeship route, e.g. development of medical secretary apprenticeship
 - Increased awareness of the Regional Skills Partnerships role and how organisations can help meet the aims / objectives of these; including how public sector organisations cover a number of sub-groups within these
 - More flexibility in how apprenticeship levy funding can be used, e.g. to offer individual units / certificates / diplomas to staff that only need to upskill in certain areas and do not want to complete the full apprenticeship, or are ineligible