

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Prentisiaethau yng Nghymru 2017 / Apprenticeships in Wales 2017
Ymateb gan Bwrdd Hyfforddi'r Diwydiant Adeiladu / Evidence from
Construction Industry Training Board

**To review progress since the 2012 report of the Enterprise and Business Committee:
Apprenticeships in Wales (PDF 403KB)**

*Including looking at the role of key players: the Regional Skills Partnerships; the Wales
Employment and Skills Board (WESB); and Sector Skills Councils*

- 1 The number of large infrastructure projects currently planned in Wales makes the need for effective apprenticeship provision even more pressing. CITB's annual Construction Skills Network (CSN)¹ report found that Construction output in Wales currently stands at £4.8bn (UK, £140bn), and employs over 128,000 people (UK, 2.6m). Wales is projected to see annual average output growth of 6.2% over the five years to 2021, the strongest of any of the English regions and devolved nations (UK average 1.7%). This expansion is driven by strong growth in the infrastructure sector (nearly 16% a year on average).
- 2 Regional Learning & Skills Partnerships have become more established and are drawing evidence from sectors to establish need. CITB has engaged closely with the three RLSPs, providing labour forecast requirements to assist with skills planning to inform the production of the regional Employment and Skills Plan.
- 3 With the mobile nature of the construction and built environment workforce and the proportionately large volume of infrastructure projects envisaged in Wales over the next planning cycle, it is essential that RLSPs continue to work with industry to inform their plans.
- 4 It is apparent that the WESB is being reinvigorated and it is important that it has sufficient representation from sectors and regions. It must be representative of the skills needs of Wales, but due consideration should be given to the status of priority sectors.
- 5 The work and contribution provided by the Sector Skills Councils varies widely. CITB, as part of ConstructionSkills, continues to play a full role in the process, providing Labour Market Intelligence, being the custodian of Apprenticeship Frameworks as well as issuing Apprenticeship Certificates through various agreements. This involvement has worked well due to the relationships formed with the various departments within Welsh Government.

CITB Recommendations:

- **Partnerships should align their work to the needs of local industry, increasing their influence and impact, and ultimately meeting the priorities of City Regions and Enterprise Zones.**
- **RLSPs should continue to work with industry to inform their plans.**

¹ <http://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn%202017-2021/csn-wales.pdf>

- **WESB targets should reflect long term industry need, with representation from regions and sectors.**
- **Welsh Government should continue to work collaboratively with CITB (ConstructionSkills) to inform apprenticeship provision in Wales.**

To scrutinise the accessibility of independent careers advice on Apprenticeships and other vocational options?

Particularly for young people, either in school, from Careers Wales, online or from other sources?

Is the Careers Wales' Apprenticeship Matching Service fit for purpose?

How can better parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes be achieved?

- 6 In countries with the strongest apprenticeship provision, apprenticeships feature as a key part of the offer of the relevant careers service. Educational institutions in Wales have in many cases prioritised academic work over technical and vocational learning.
- 7 Parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes can only be achieved through an information sharing process, with evidence being demonstrated of the values of both routes to all involved parties, Teachers, careers advisors and parents all have a stake in shaping the decisions young people make when leaving school and in helping address the balance between vocational and academic study options. Financial gain and benefits for education providers and other organisations should not be a barrier for an individual choosing the most appropriate route for them.
- 8 CITB's 2016 report 'Careers Information Advice and Guidance Research Report 2016' found that 47% of young people in Wales were told by their school that studying for a university degree would be better for their career in the long term than taking an Apprenticeship. 78% of young people in Wales stated they would be going to University, which was significantly higher than the GB total at 66% and the highest of all nations and regions.
- 9 In the same research, when exploring what Apprenticeships young people were aware of, 38% of young people in Wales were aware of Higher Apprenticeships, 41% Degree Level Apprenticeships and 40% weren't aware of any.
- 10 In construction, many apprenticeship applicants will use the bconstructive and Go Construct websites to access both information and links through which they can apply for an apprenticeship.

CITB Recommendations:

- **Apprenticeships need to be a key part of careers advice for young people in Wales.**
- **Teachers, careers advisors and parents need better access to high quality information about apprenticeships.**

- **Careers Wales should work closely with industry representative bodies to increase awareness and promote a greater understanding of the different sectors and opportunities available.**
- **CITB will continue to work closely with Careers Wales and other providers to raise awareness of the range of opportunities within construction.**

To investigate the main barriers to taking up Apprenticeships?

How accessible are Apprenticeships for people with disabilities (all ages)?

How can people from the lowest income families be supported to take-up Apprenticeships?

What good practice exists and what more can be done to address gender stereotyping?

- 11 Construction has made significant effort to address a range of issues that that have caused under-representation in the sector from those with disabilities, young people from low income families and women.
- 12 In some areas young people eligible for free school meals are half as likely to start a level three apprenticeship.² Students from low income backgrounds often lack the support necessary to access opportunities, both in information availability and financial support. Financial concerns in particular have been highlighted as a key barrier for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds starting an apprenticeship, as they are perceived to be a low-wage option due to the low minimum hourly rate.
- 13 Apprentices from low income families miss out on the financial support that is available to those in full time education or training, for example the Special Support Grant available to university students. There have been occurrences where young people have been prevented from starting an apprenticeship due to a perceived reduction to overall household benefits. This should not be allowed to happen.
- 14 There is still a gender imbalance within the construction industry. This disparity prevents businesses recruiting from the widest pool of talent. Improving gender balance can bring with it other business benefits, with research linking diversity to better financial returns, innovation and diverse thinking.³
- 15 Outdated views of parents, carers and wider society regarding ‘appropriate’ careers for young women in particular and students in general have often been a barrier to a more inclusive and diverse uptake of apprenticeships. This is also connected to the wider issue of whether apprenticeships are seen as a route to a successful career, a view that has been found to be particularly pervasive in ethnic minority communities.⁴
- 16 CITB has funded ‘Go Construct,’ a website to help people learn about a career in construction. More than 400 organisations including employers, careers advisors, teachers, lecturers and construction ambassadors were involved in the design of the

² <https://www.trainingjournal.com/articles/news/young-people-low-income-backgrounds-less-likely-undertake-apprenticeship>

³ <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>

⁴ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnderRepresentationInApprenticeships.pdf>

project. Go Construct challenges stereotypes about what working in construction is really like and demonstrates the hundreds of career options and entry routes available.

17 Construction Ambassadors are trained by CITB to engage at careers events, visit schools and talk to young people about career options. We have actively recruited female Construction Ambassadors to act as role models to change the perceptions of the next generation.

CITB Recommendations:

- **Initiatives to encourage underrepresented groups should be focussed on areas of greatest need to address skills shortages in appropriate areas.**
- **Have a Go equipment and Skills Competitions should continue to be used to attract individuals to non-typical careers.**
- **The salary progression that occurs as skills develop and the long term earning potential of people who have completed an apprenticeship needs to be promoted to those from low income families.**
- **Parents and guardians need to be made aware of the variety of Apprenticeships that are available and the progression routes that they offer.**

To scrutinise the development of higher level Apprenticeships, with the support of further and higher education institutions?

How effective is progression between other work-based learning and Apprenticeships and between Levels 2, 3, 4 and above Apprenticeships?

18 There have been limited options available in Higher Apprenticeships in Wales. CITB worked with employers, the Construction Wales Innovation Centre (CWIC) and the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) to develop a higher apprenticeship route to encourage progression from first line supervision into management. The pilots have been successful and this model is being successfully rolled out further across the further education network.

19 Employers have been keen to see a higher apprenticeship be developed to enable further progression, but also to enable A Level (or equivalent) entrants to enter the industry. This is currently being developed with employers to meet their needs and it is hoped will see a pathway that culminates with the award of an Honours Degree as well as competence qualifications along the way. The challenges of working with FE and HE and the associated funding arrangements are still to be finalised.

20 It is important that advanced apprentices who want to progress to higher education are given access to information about their options and opportunities to advance their career. However, progression rates are currently low; there is a lack of entry criteria information as well as inflexible delivery of learning provision.⁵

CITB Recommendations:

⁵ http://www.bbk.ac.uk/linkinglondon/resources/qualifications-resources/apprenticeships/pub_Feb2011_Apprenticeships_and_progression_to_Higher_Education.pdf

- **The Higher Apprenticeships developed should be rolled out further and marketed more widely.**
- **Further and higher education need to work collaboratively to ensure that completing an apprenticeship enables portability and continued progression across a wide range of education pathways. Expanding the levels at which apprenticeships are offered will also allow apprentices to progress through a higher level apprenticeship pathway.**
- **Every apprenticeship framework should include potential progression routes after completion of the apprenticeship.**

How can employer engagement with Apprenticeships be improved?

- 21 Apprenticeships bring substantial benefits to both learners (through increased wages over their lifetime) and to employers (through increased productivity).
- 22 Effectively engaging employers with apprenticeships is essential in developing the skills of the future workforce. Employers have a vital part to play in preparing young people for future careers and to help them acquire life skills. It is equally important to promote the benefits of having an apprentice to employers as 80% of employers say apprentices have made their workplace more productive.⁶ CITB's Construction Work Experience Programme can help employers see why an apprentice is good for business and cost effective as employees develop their own supervisory skills while they look after the work experience person and, in turn, feel valued in the workplace.
- 23 Sustained engagement of stakeholders, especially employers, at every level is a core feature in successful apprenticeship systems. It is important to put an effective arrangement in place in order to secure the active participation of key stakeholders in any new apprenticeship model that may emerge as a result of the current Qualifications Wales review of Construction and Built Environment qualifications, to ensure it meets their needs, both now and in the future.

CITB Recommendations:

- **Greater numbers of employers need to be provided with information and evidence on the value that an apprentice can bring to their business.**
- **Welsh Government should continue to provide clear strategic direction on apprenticeships in Wales and provide stability and consistency of message over as long a planning horizon as possible.**

⁶ <http://www.citb.co.uk/citb-apprenticeships/about-apprenticeships/>