



# CHAOS TO COORDINATION

Towards a 'one-stop'  
apprenticeship platform

September 2025

By Sorah Gluck  
and Holly Papworth

Making Education Relevant

[www.edge.co.uk](http://www.edge.co.uk)



The world is changing fast and education needs to keep up. Edge is an independent, politically impartial education foundation. We want education to be relevant to the twenty-first century. We gather evidence through research and real world projects and partnerships and use this to lead the debate and influence policy and practice.

Edge believes all young people need to be equipped with the skills that today's global, digital economy demands, through a broad and balanced curriculum, high quality training, engaging real world learning and rich relationships between education and employers.

Visit [www.edge.co.uk](http://www.edge.co.uk) to find out more.



---

# CONTENTS

---

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Part one: Issues with current applications system</b>	<b>8</b>
Unsupported	8
Complex and Duplicative	12
Technical Difficulties	13
Hard to Find: 'You Cannot Be What You Cannot See'	15
<b>Part two: Towards a one-stop shop</b>	<b>17</b>
Back to Basics	17
Wraparound Support	19
Working to a Timeline	20
Creating Community	23
Monitoring Applications and Feedback	24
<b>Part three: Next steps for policy development and delivery</b>	<b>25</b>
Recommendations	26
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>30</b>

---

We would like to thank Careers Compass and the many people who we interviewed as part of this report for their support and co-operation.

# FOREWORD

Apprenticeships transform lives, delivering high-quality, debt-free pathways into skilled careers and addressing the urgent needs of employers. Yet despite progress, the apprenticeship system still too often falls short, leaving many young people unsupported, and many vacancies hidden beyond reach. In my own constituency of Peterborough, we have seen falling apprenticeship numbers (especially at Levels 2 and 3) and rising levels of youth unemployment.

I came into Parliament with a mission to better the lives of my constituents and make Peterborough a hub for growth. This can't be achieved without a clear commitment to skills. As Co-Chair of the Apprenticeships APPG, I have had the pleasure of meeting with hundreds of apprentices and their employers, and have seen first-hand how they transform lives and contribute to our nation's growth.

That is why **I welcome this timely report by the Edge Foundation, which seeks to bridge the gap between young people and local opportunity.** These opportunities are out there and we've seen a welcome increase in apprenticeship starts and completions under this Labour Government. However, we need to make sure that they're reaching the right people – we continue to see a stubborn, steady decline in under-19s and SMEs engaging with apprenticeships.

A one-stop shop, bringing all apprenticeship opportunities in one place is a key part of the solution. I am particularly pleased to see this report call for a 'clearing' system, so that unsuccessful applicants can be offered a place with smaller employers, something that we have called in the Apprenticeships APPG.

We owe it to our young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET, to make apprenticeships visible, accessible, and aspirational. I look forward to continuing to work with the Edge Foundation, my fellow Parliamentarians, and Ministers to move from a place of chaos to coordination.

**Andrew Pakes MP**

MP for Peterborough

Co-Chair, Apprenticeships APPG



Photo: [Andrew Pakes](#) | [Licence](#)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people are more interested in apprenticeships than ever before, but the system for finding and applying to them is failing to keep pace. In 2023, over 40% of UCAS applicants expressed an interest in apprenticeships. Yet, research supported by Edge shows that one in three young people who try to secure an apprenticeship fail, and too many give up due to a lack of support and an unduly complex application process.

This report is based on extensive interviews and roundtables with young people, apprentices, employers, training providers, devolved authorities, careers advisers, policy professionals and apprenticeship platforms conducted by Edge between **March and July 2025**. It finds that the current system for advertising and applying for apprenticeships is **unsupported, complex to navigate**, and **duplicative**. In turn, this is:

- Preventing schools and colleges from providing high-quality, impartial information about apprenticeships, as required by statutory guidance;
- Holding young people back from making first-class applications to their dream apprenticeship or putting them off applying altogether;
- Hindering employers – especially SMEs – from advertising opportunities externally and taking on young apprentices; and, ultimately
- Undermining mission-critical Government ambitions like the Youth Guarantee and reforms to the skills training landscape.



Our vision is for a national **one-stop shop** for apprenticeships, built on the existing Find an Apprenticeship platform on the Government website, which hosts all available apprenticeship vacancies, with intuitive search functions and wraparound application features that benefit prospective apprentices and hiring managers.

**We recommend:**

1. **All employers accessing Growth and Skills Levy funds for apprenticeships should be required to advertise their vacancies externally via the Government's Find an Apprenticeship service, or a new central platform, as a condition of funding to improve transparency, equity, and visibility of apprenticeship opportunities.**
2. **To improve usability and trust in the Find an Apprenticeship service – especially among those who currently find it impenetrable – the Department for Education should:**
  - o **Integrate existing resources**, such as Skills England's **Occupational Maps**, into the platform
  - o **Expand wraparound resources and signposting** to better support younger apprentices with the practicalities of starting an apprenticeship, like setting up a bank account, understanding payslips, applying for council tax discounts, managing money, finding somewhere to live. A **community engagement feature**, allowing prospective apprentices to ask questions to apprentices a few years ahead in their journey, should also be included.
3. **The Department for Education and Skills England should launch a national campaign to help employers align apprenticeship recruitment with the academic calendar.** Other improvements should also be made, including a new **'clearing' system** to help unsuccessful applicants find opportunities elsewhere, and removing the two-factor authentication requirement.

# INTRODUCTION

In September 2024, Edge published [Flex Without Compromise](#) – a policy report with recommendations to reverse the decline of apprenticeship opportunities for young people, particularly at entry-level. This follow-up report turns attention to the process of discovering and applying for those opportunities.

Despite progress – such as UCAS beginning to list apprenticeships alongside degrees and investment into the Find an Apprenticeship service – the process remains needlessly complex. Young people navigate a fragmented maze of job boards, timelines and opaque requirements, with little structured support or feedback on how to improve.

## PART ONE

In Part One of this report, we share a snapshot of the reflections on the existing system for advertising and applying for apprenticeships from a series of interviews and roundtables with stakeholders, including current and former apprentices, employers, training providers, devolved authorities and careers advisers.

## PART TWO

Part Two explores the features or components of our vision for a 'one-stop shop' where all prospective apprentices and employers can see and advertise opportunities in one place.

## PART THREE

Then there's the question of how to get there. **Part Three** contains a roadmap for Government – and other interested parties – towards a one-stop shop, including the quicker wins and the longer-term ambition to ensure all young people get the right advice and support to secure an apprenticeship.

# PART ONE: ISSUES WITH CURRENT APPLICATIONS SYSTEM



## Unsupported

On paper, the indications are positive: **94%** of schools provided the majority of students with information about the full range of apprenticeships, according to the latest Gatsby Benchmark results 2023-4<sup>1</sup>, while according to the Careers and Enterprise Company, 80% of Year 11 students understand apprenticeships (almost on par with A Levels at 84%)<sup>2</sup>. But Edge's own research<sup>3</sup> has found crucial gaps in the careers guidance young people receive, especially in how it relates to technical and vocational education and training, with consequences on their ability to make informed choices and remain on their courses.

Nor do these statistics tell us very much about how apprenticeships are presented to young people. Statutory guidance from the Department for Education makes clear that *'careers guidance should be:*

- *impartial, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option*
- *include information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes*
- *consider the best interests of the students to whom it is given*<sup>4</sup>.

Yet, **none of the apprentices we interviewed for this project suggested their school or college dedicated equal time and energy to supporting students interested in applying for apprenticeships, as they did for students pursuing university.** Indeed, research from the Sutton Trust revealed that 1 in 3 apprentices from a lower socioeconomic background received no support whatsoever with their application<sup>5</sup>. For



'Issues begin before the application even begins, as young people aren't aware of apprenticeships. There's a missing middle between those who think they're too good for apprenticeships and those who think they're not good enough.'

Former apprentice and founder



'I received a lot of pushback in high school and college. In high school, no one knew anything. They kept on saying that you should probably go to university, and I kind of just ignored them.'

Chartered management degree apprentice in a multinational telecommunications company





'The schools will give them dedicated UCAS times, they can apply for five university places in one go. And there's still the lack of understanding that you need to tailor and apply for each individual apprenticeship differently. And I think that is something that kind of does let a lot of young people down.'

Hiring manager in the NHS



'There was no recognition of apprenticeships, there was no support for it. In form time, we were writing our UCAS personal statements, we were setting up our profiles to apply to universities. And I was a bit uncomfortable. I worked on my CV and looked for apprenticeship vacancies instead.'

Chartered management degree apprentice in a multinational telecommunications company



'...The concept of an apprenticeship was so new to me. Even though I was bought into it, I still had a lot of uncertainty, and I genuinely just had to trust the process. Unlike university, which I knew like the back of my hand, even though I didn't look into it, it was just something that's naturally embedded into our school system and society and a measure of success in life.'

Chartered management degree apprentice in a multinational telecommunications company

those who cannot rely on their own families or networks for help, the lack of high-quality support young people receive can be detrimental to their ability to secure an opportunity. Edge's *Young Lives, Young Futures* study with King's College London found that *'There was no clear, common pathway into apprenticeship as there is for higher education through UCAS for either young people or their employers and levels of support and guidance from schools and colleges was extremely varied.'*<sup>6</sup>

The careers advisers we spoke to raised a series of factors affecting the **impartiality** of careers advice. Many felt university was the preferred pathway of senior leaders and teachers, and this impacted the types of careers activities and speakers they organised for students. One adviser reported being told by senior leaders that ensuring there was a high percentage of students going to university was essential because what else would they advertise on the school banner? There is a mismatch between the time and support afforded to vocational pathways, like apprenticeships, in schools, and how the public (including parents, employers and young people) value them<sup>7</sup>. Only 1 in 10 parents and carers and 5 in 10 teachers and careers advisers feel confident in supporting students with the apprenticeship application process, according to polling from Amazing Apprenticeships<sup>8</sup>.

Additionally, **careers advisers cannot rely on the apprenticeship application process to offer the kind of advice and guidance about apprenticeships they feel they ought to.**

The process of researching, looking for vacancies and applying is extremely time and resource-intensive. From scouring **multiple jobs boards** and apprenticeship-specific websites, checking well-intentioned emails and alerts from employers, keeping on top of the **different application windows** throughout the academic year (often clashing with exam season), and the **absence of feedback** for apprenticeships impedes the quality of support advisers can give. Many of the careers advisers we spoke to did not feel confident in their knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships, and this is compounded by the limited time that careers advisers have (with many working part-time) to support every student with their next steps.

The defunding of the **Apprenticeship Support Knowledge (ASK) programme** from 1 August 2025, which supported schools and colleges in England to raise awareness of apprenticeships and T Levels, was raised unprompted in the roundtable with careers advisers as a real source of concern, particularly given the absence of any plan for alternative provision<sup>9</sup>. As the findings in this policy report and Edge's other research<sup>10</sup> serve to highlight, if we truly want to deliver gold-standard careers advice to young people about the full range of options, starving resources away from careers provision is a wrong-headed decision.

Ultimately, those working in schools and colleges told us that they feel they *have to* recommend their students – even those set on an apprenticeship – should apply for both their chosen apprenticeship and go through the UCAS process to apply for university as a 'backup'. The risk of not securing an apprenticeship is too great. Research from King's College London and the Edge Foundation's *Young Lives, Young Futures* study, found that **for every young person who obtained an apprenticeship, three tried to get one and failed**<sup>11</sup>.

**Creating the right economic conditions and removing the barriers employers face that prevent them from offering apprenticeships and training**

“

'All of my teachers and careers advisers in sixth form pushed me to go to a Russell Group university, they thought that was the only way to become a solicitor. The first ever Level 7 solicitor apprenticeship started in 2016, it was new and people weren't aware of it, or held a stigma around the word apprenticeship. But I knew traditional university wasn't for me. So, I just literally Googled when I got home: "Can I do an apprenticeship to become a solicitor?" It was just something that wasn't spoken about in schools back then.'

Former solicitor degree apprentice in an international law firm

3:1

For every young person who secures an apprenticeship, three try but fail

*Young Lives, Young Futures* longitudinal study, King's College London and the Edge Foundation

**opportunities to young people must be a priority for the Government if it is to deliver the targets underpinning the Opportunity Mission.** How to go about that is something Edge has explored in an earlier report, *Flex Without Compromise*, and smoothing the process of finding and recruiting talent is certainly part of that equation<sup>12</sup>.



## Complex and Duplicative

*'There are a few ways to search for apprenticeship vacancies',* optimistically reads the Education Hub from the Department for Education<sup>13</sup>. A more accurate description might be:

From Government alone, there is (at least) the 'Find an Apprenticeship' service<sup>14</sup>, the 'Browse apprenticeships' tool on the apprenticeships.gov.uk website<sup>15</sup>, and an 'apprenticeship finder' tool on the Skills England website<sup>16</sup>. But prospective apprentices also trawl through various jobs boards, employers' early career portals, training providers' websites and, in some cases, industry or area-specific careers sites. According to the latest Youth Voice Census, just 1 in 5 apprentices found their apprenticeship through the Find an Apprenticeship website.<sup>17</sup>

And, with many young people lacking adequate support from their school, college or families, apprenticeship-specific websites (like Not Going to Uni, Unifrog, Amazing Apprenticeships, OuterCircle, and HigherIn) have stepped in to showcase apprenticeship vacancies alongside wider careers resources, community networks or forums, in an effort to consolidate and simplify the landscape.

UCAS – a trusted name amongst schools, colleges, young people and families, which sees significant traffic of potential apprentices (more than 40 per cent of students applying through UCAS in 2023 expressed an interest in apprenticeships<sup>18</sup>) – have also taken some welcome steps to advertise apprenticeships alongside degree opportunities.

Nonetheless, there is a long way to go if we are to reduce the complexity and duplication in the apprenticeship application process.

With so many different places to search, the apprenticeship application process is extremely **time-consuming to navigate**, particularly for young people who may be researching career options and studying for exams. Careers advisers expressed concern that this is actually putting off young people from applying altogether, opting to apply for university instead.



**'It's like a minefield! There's millions of them [application websites], and we don't know what's right and what we should use. It's mad that I did my apprenticeship nearly eleven years ago, and it's still the same.'**

Former business admin apprentice, now overseeing apprentice recruitment for an SME in construction



**'[The] user interface... for both the Government Find an Apprenticeship Service and UCAS isn't where it should be just now, especially when it comes to working with those young people who maybe have used UCAS in the past to find and apply to universities. I don't think the university and apprenticeship pages are currently in parallel or compatible [with] each other.'**

Apprenticeship Adviser at a corporate law firm



“

'The prices for using alternative recruitment platforms to advertise vacancies are extortionate, and the challenge is that we're not one NHS. So, that would be 220 NHS Trusts advertising individually. It's not like other large employers who do one intake every September, and it's done and dusted. We've never been able to make it work in terms of cost.'

Hiring manager in the NHS



“

'You've got to pay to be part of UCAS and part of advertising your vacancies so, obviously, SMEs don't have the money to do things like that.'

Former business admin apprentice, now overseeing apprentice recruitment for an SME in construction

Certain commercial careers platforms **charge a fee to education institutions**, creating a postcode lottery of provision. Where schools choose to invest in careers platforms, pupils have access to these resources, support and opportunities, whilst others go without. Moreover, some platforms (and training providers) charge employers to advertise a vacancy on their site, in exchange for access to their talent pools of students. We heard repeatedly from employers, particularly SMEs, that this **cost of advertising** puts them off doing so.

For the most part, these sites and platforms scrape data from adverts on the Government's Find an Apprenticeship service, which depends on employers advertising opportunities. This multiplicity wouldn't necessarily be a problem if young people could be confident in what they were looking for (and the website filtering functions allowed them to easily narrow their search), and the labour market was buoyant. But these challenges come to the fore in **uncertain economic environments as hiring conditions weaken**, with young people – and unemployed – forced to adapt and adjust expectations about their chosen career pathway.

## Technical Difficulties

With ambitious plans to move DWP services online, backed by £55 million for testing and digital design, the Government may wish to look first at the lessons from the Find an Apprenticeship service<sup>19, 20</sup>. Built by the (now defunct) Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Find an Apprenticeship service on the GOV.UK website launched in 2014 as a tool to allow providers and employers to post and manage apprenticeship vacancies, and help individuals search and apply for opportunities by job title, categories, companies and location (city or postcode). The service is part of the wider [Apprenticeship Service](#), which also includes tools for employers to manage their apprenticeship programmes, the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network and, more recently, the apprenticeship app for current apprentices<sup>21</sup>.

It is important to note that the Find an Apprenticeship team in the Department for Education have made numerous improvements to the platform which went

live in July 2024 following in-depth and extensive user testing. These include links to webpages that explain the different apprenticeship levels; enhanced filtering by wage, start and close dates; a map function to find apprenticeships in your area; standardised application questions; and a 'check your travel' to work function allowing the user to preview their journey on Google Maps. The team also regularly monitors user feedback to make smaller changes to the website (for example, adding the 'save for later' function).

For the apprentices we spoke to, the main complaints we heard were around the user interface, which have largely been addressed in the 2024 improvements. However, they have also asked for wider resources or support, such as more general guidance around careers, and CV building. This feels like a missed opportunity to support young people into apprenticeships.



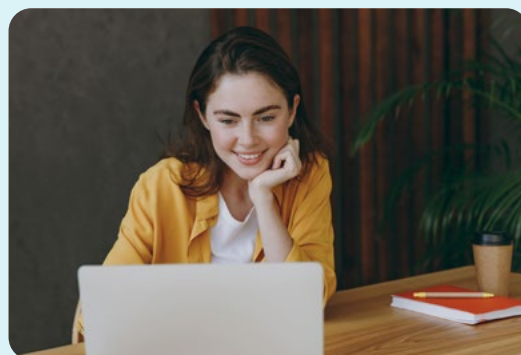
**'It's very rigid and almost looks like something that was created 20 years ago'**

Apprenticeship Adviser at a corporate law firm



**'The Government website – I tried to use it, but it just wasn't as intuitive I guess. I'd say the user interface wasn't as friendly or clean as some of the other websites to be fair, so I didn't really use it.'**

Former cybersecurity apprentice in a multinational technology company



**'A lot of candidates will go to the websites of the different law firms directly and make a decision based on that. Whereas, on the Government website, somebody might be looking for an apprenticeship in Manchester. On the off chance that they find a solicitor apprenticeship, they apply but actually, they might not have a full motivational link for applying for that specific role.'**

Apprenticeship Adviser at a corporate law firm

There are additional features available for those who choose to create a Find an Apprenticeship account, such as the ability to set up alerts for new apprenticeship opportunities relevant to your interests, and manage your applications in one place. However, since 2024 these services are only available through a GOV.UK One Login account which requires two-factor authentication. This could potentially create a barrier for young people who only have access to one digital device.

When it comes to approving employers' adverts, the Find an Apprenticeship service has come under fire repeatedly. For example, in 2023, FE Week reported that the algorithm was automatically rejecting adverts with words like 'man' or 'head'<sup>22</sup>. We understand from the DfE that this issue has since been addressed, while the turnaround time for advert approvals has markedly improved.



'It would be just hit or miss. You would fill it in exactly per the template, and then it would be on hold and you would have to then try and get through to find out what the specific problem was. And nine times out of 10, it would just be user error on their end. It was really frustrating.'

Hiring manager in the NHS



'I actually preferred it [the Government Find an Apprenticeship website] to send me to the employer's website to apply, because if I applied through the GOV. UK website instead, and it had an API [Application Programming Interface] that linked into the organisation's application system, I don't think I would have trusted that API to do the technical stuff, to get it sent across.'

Chartered management degree apprentice in a multinational telecommunications company

## Hard to Find: 'You Cannot Be What You Cannot See'

And then there's the issue of **employers who opt not to advertise their vacancies externally** on sites like the Government's Find an Apprenticeship service altogether, for other reasons. For some,

it's lack of awareness – polling conducted by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) in July 2025 for the Edge Foundation found that almost **2 in 5** businesses (38.9%) had never heard of the Find an Apprenticeship platform. Additionally, there are certain industries – particularly those with a strong SME base, like construction and agriculture – that have traditionally relied on established networks (friends, family) or their close relationships with training providers and colleges to find talent, and continue to prefer that route. Some employers with highly competitive roles can advertise exclusively through their own early careers websites, avoiding the administrative burden of adding the vacancy to the Find an Apprenticeship service and reporting, anecdotally, that they receive higher quality applications from those young people who apply direct.

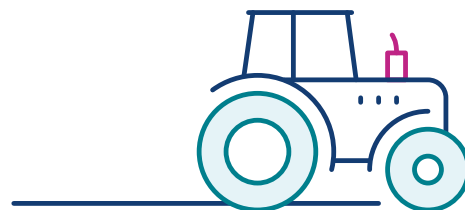
These **close employer-education partnerships should be encouraged to flourish**: they are an essential part of broadening young people's aspirations, often generating all-important funding or resource-in-kind for the education provider, and offering routes to work-based learning opportunities and employment, helping to meet local labour market skills needs. However, presently, **just 3 in 10 young people believe that they will be able to access quality job opportunities in their local area**<sup>23</sup>.

At the time of writing, c.44,000 apprenticeships are currently listed. **To realise the ambitions of the Youth Guarantee** – ensuring that all 18 to 21-year-olds (c.3 million people<sup>24</sup>) have access to education, training, or employment opportunities – **and meet the soaring demand from young people for apprenticeships, visibility of opportunity will be mission-critical.**

In tandem, the Government must continue **removing barriers for SMEs** to engage in the apprenticeship system and access first-class talent. That starts even before the recruitment process, with investment into brokerage services to end the postcode lottery of support for small businesses to understand their skills needs and the apprenticeship and training landscape, as we make the case in *Agents of Change (2025)*.



## CASE STUDY: HARVESTING TALENT IN AGRICULTURE



The pace of technological advancement in the agriculture and land-based engineering industry in the UK – responsible for developing, designing and manufacturing the machinery used in farming and food production – demands a highly-skilled workforce, with apprenticeships a long-standing model for training. However, despite the demand for young talent in an ageing workforce, the sector remains highly relationship-based, relying on word-of-mouth, local careers fairs, and informal pathways to fill roles. As one representative from a leading agricultural manufacturer described it, *'Most dealers wouldn't dream of putting their apprentice advert on the website. They'd rather go down to the local schools.'*

The in-person nature of the roles in agricultural engineering means that, *'if a 16-year-old is going to become an apprentice, there must be public transport or a parent to drop-off, so a 10-mile radius, really'*. Advertising opportunities more widely – whether online via the Government's Find an Apprenticeship service or at national sector events might offer access to thousands of young people, but if there isn't an employer close by or the right opportunity available, it becomes 'underwhelming' for the prospective candidates, and an ineffective use of employers' valuable time and resource. *'These are busy firms without full departmental structure, without HR'*. The administrative burden of advertising vacancies through online platforms and sifting applications is unrealistic.

The other challenge that employers are all too aware of is the importance of retention on the apprenticeship. Frontloading the relationship-building aspect of recruitment by encouraging young people to start with a part-time Saturday or summer job gives both parties an opportunity to 'make sure everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet'. It affords the employer the chance to 'cherry-pick' the ones with a genuine passion for the industry and way of life, and it lets the young person know what they're signing up for.





## PART TWO: TOWARDS A ONE-STOP SHOP



Polling by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation on behalf of Edge found that almost 3 in 4 employers (74.2%) would find it somewhat or extremely useful to be able to advertise apprenticeship vacancies on one central platform used by all employers and prospective apprentices.

In this section, we set out the features or components of our vision for this 'one-stop shop'. We see this best-placed as an extension of the existing Government website, the Find an Apprenticeship service, which offers a free-to-access, publicly funded platform with broad reach and impartiality. However, the DfE may wish to consider hosting this service on a separate platform.



'I do think we need to have a single source of truth... That's a no-brainer, because the university application process is highly regulated, highly standardised. There are no or very few things that can kind of throw you off. Whereas with an apprenticeship, oh my God, everything varies between employer, training provider, university... You don't know what you're going to get!'

Chartered management degree apprentice in a multinational telecommunications company

## 3 in 4 employers

(74.2%) would find it somewhat or extremely useful to be able to advertise apprenticeships vacancies on one central platform used by all employers and prospective apprentices.

REC polling of 234 employers in England, conducted for Edge Foundation, in field 10-21 July 2025

## Back to Basics

Many of the (now) apprentices that we spoke to told us they weren't necessarily confident in what they were looking for when searching for apprenticeship vacancies. They might have started with an industry or company in mind, or know they want to pursue a degree-level apprenticeship, but when it came down to the specific job roles, some were clearer than others.

We want young people to make informed choices about their next steps and submit top calibre applications. To complement careers advice and guidance in schools and colleges, the process of searching for an apprenticeship through a one-stop shop could be better **utilised to strengthen**

**understanding of what an apprenticeship is, what it entails, as well as the progression opportunities and career pathways to broaden aspirations.** Keeping this information in one place – or signposting from one central hub – ensures every young person that is considering applying for an apprenticeship has access to the same free, high-quality information should they wish to access it. This means not assuming knowledge, but offering intuitive resources, developed in consultation with young people and other users.

Steps in this direction have been made. For example, the Government's Find an Apprenticeship service has a 'Before you start' webpage<sup>25</sup>, which outlines basic information like the educational equivalent for the different apprenticeship levels. Elsewhere, on the apprenticeships.gov.uk website, there is a Resource Hub<sup>26</sup> including PDF guides to apprenticeship applications and interviews. These should be amalgamated into the Find an Apprenticeship website to avoid duplication. Skills England's **Occupational Maps**<sup>27</sup> offer a visual representation of the potential career paths that exist between occupations and technical education, demonstrating 'the art of the possible' according to one employer. More information should be available from the employer side too, including existing government guidance on employing an apprentice, incentives available, and a link to the Business Growth Service to enable businesses to find support in their local area. With some changes in line with user feedback, these should also be incorporated into the one-stop shop to allow prospective apprentices to explore their options.



**'It was like definitely over 20 [applications]. But it was a mix of banks and tech companies mainly... I didn't really know what in technology I wanted to go into, to be honest.'**

Former cybersecurity apprentice in a multinational technology company



**'Candidates would benefit from additional Government resources around how to apply for apprenticeships, advice around how to prepare their CV, how to make good impression, prepare for assessments and interviews, and general advice. So that could be something that perhaps wouldn't be a high-cost thing to develop, but the candidates could benefit from just one place where they could find additional information.'**

Apprenticeship Adviser at a corporate law firm



**'We've got 350, different careers in the NHS, and a lot of you know the smaller, unique professions, people wouldn't know what a protist, an orthotist, is, but you could have a little clip about a day in the life and what that actually entails. And it's really exciting. It's all about the robotic limbs that they build for amputees. But no one would know about that unless you unless you know kind of thing. So yeah, I do think that that would be, you know, just to kind of showcase what the roles actually mean.'**

Hiring manager in the NHS





“

'A lot of young people, if they do know about apprenticeships, they're focused on the higher-level degree ones, and haven't thought about coming in at level two, level three, level five. And you know, so when you have that conversation, they're like, 'Oh my God!' And then they'll do a search, and they'll see there's a lot more vacancies at those levels.'

Hiring manager in the NHS

“

'Definitely something around relocating, and then also finances as well. You know, you're handing a 16-year-old, 18-year-old, a salary. They might not be fortunate enough to have a family who know a lot about financial literacy... like saving and all that sort of stuff... And I guess if you're moving out, like council tax bills, because you know you're probably becoming an adult when you're starting working.'

Civil engineering degree apprentice in a global engineering firm



## Wraparound Support

Part of the retention piece is also about ensuring young people are fully aware of what life as an apprentice entails, particularly if this is their first job. A one-stop shop should include information and signposting around relocation and finding accommodation, setting up bank accounts, bills, wage slips, taxes and pensions.

## Working to a Timeline

Not all employers can plan their vacancies or forecast their skills needs. But many companies – large and small – are missing out on some of the best young talent by **conducting their apprenticeship hiring processes during critical points in the academic year**, like exam season, or after students have laid plans for the September after they have finished school – selected their post-16 destination or firmed their UCAS options.

Ultimately, we'd like to see more employers – large and small – aligning their recruitment cycles to the university milestones in the academic year. In Northern Ireland, this is already starting to happen. **Workplus** is a centralised platform with **a campaign around common dates** so that employers and applicants know each step of the application process in advance.

And, building on the existing feature to 'register your interest' in certain apprenticeships, industries

or companies, to the one-stop shop could host **a 'talent pool'** for employers of proactive candidates, and allow prospective apprentices to explore their options and ensure they don't miss out on opportunities whilst being able to focus on their studies. This could also involve **a 'clearing' service** to help unsuccessful applicants find opportunities with other (perhaps smaller) companies with open vacancies, similar to what has been proposed by the Apprenticeships APPG<sup>28</sup> as well as what will be available through the new UCAS defence portal, announced in the recent Defence Industrial Strategy.<sup>29</sup>

The **South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub** has gone some way towards solving this issue by creating a local apprentice employer directory, which includes details about the organisation's recruitment start and ends dates, alongside wider information about the company. From other parts of the UK, we can learn from the experience of Workplus in Northern Ireland.

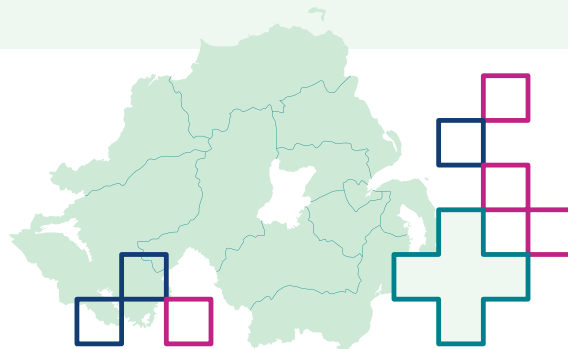


'You have to balance academics so, you know, exams, revision, and then also, you're applying for loads of different companies... "stressful" is probably a big word that would come out speaking to a lot of apprentices. And I think companies need to do better to move the application process so it's earlier, so it can be done before January... Because, at the end of the day, applicants, if they've got academic work, they won't have enough time to give their full potential.'

Civil engineering degree apprentice in a global engineering firm



## CASE STUDY: WORKPLUS



Over the last decade in Northern Ireland, there has been a policy push to revitalise apprenticeships, borne out of concern that the traditional university experience wasn't necessarily producing 'work-ready' graduates, and skills gaps were a major pain point for businesses and growth. In 2015, the NI Government's Skills Barometer report identified civil engineering as a fast-growing sector with high demand for Level 3-5 skills over the next ten years<sup>30</sup>. But the sector lacked an apprenticeship pathway. Workplus began with a group of 24 competitors came together to develop the Level 3 Civil Engineering apprenticeship, launched by the Economy Minister in June 2016 with an initial 50 apprenticeships<sup>31</sup>.

Workplus is now supporting employers across all sectors of the economy. Richard Kirk, CEO, says *'We've built bespoke software to support the funnelling of both sides: bringing employers to the table, showing them which apprenticeships are available and, on the other side, helping aspiring apprentices, parents, carers, careers advisers and work coaches to see apprenticeships are a great way to make a start or change career.'* Since 2019, Workplus has helped over 100 employers connect with over 5,500 applicants.

Workplus supports apprentice applicants with a **free, single point of application**, aligned around a **common window for applying and recruiting apprentices** twice a year, with most courses starting in September or October. During the Workplus application campaigns, candidates can view the live job opportunities available that year. Resources – including stories, webinars and podcasts from employers and apprentices – are available year-round to support decision-making, and there is a **community network** of Workplus apprentices.



Richard explained: *'I often think of it like when you go to a festival or a concert and the curtain comes back, you want everyone in the band to be in time and playing the same tune. And that's exactly the experience that we want to give the applicants. We run a campaign based around common dates for employers and applicants to coordinate together. A beat that everyone can dance to.'*

*'The Workplus platform makes it really easy to apply. You only have to complete one application form to apply to loads of different companies. I had a friend who contacted 25 different companies about an apprenticeship only to get a response from two! The structure of the application form also makes it fair for everyone as we are all asked the same questions.'* - Rebecca Simpson, Apprentice Quantity Surveyor at Northstone.

The application process is **nearly entirely standardised**. All candidates create a profile which includes qualifications or predicted grades, work experience, and **five 150-word questions**. During the application campaigns, candidates select the apprenticeships they want to apply to, as well as ranking employers. There is an optional aptitude test. Employers will then review all the information provided to shortlist candidates based on their chosen filters. Employers then have the flexibility to manage their own interview process, but make their offers within the campaign timeframe.

*'As a small company, we don't have the time to go out into the marketplace or visit all the schools. The promotion and matching process from Workplus helps us find apprentices that are the right fit, which supports retention.'* - Shauna Herron, MD at Aegion.

*'Smaller businesses, especially in the tech space, often switch off to apprenticeships because they don't know where to start. Workplus was also very helpful in this and we got a programme in place easily.'* - Daniel Hendrie, Director of Engineering at Teamworks.

In April 2025, the Economy Minister announced Workplus would be one of six organisations to receive up to £100,000 over 18 months through the Apprenticeship Inclusion Challenge Fund, to pilot ways to remove barriers to apprenticeships, particularly for women, people with disabilities and people from disadvantaged areas<sup>32</sup>.

### Employer sign-up

**11 August 2025**

The sooner you get involved, the more you'll be seen.

### Applications Open

**11 – 25 August 2025**

We work with schools, parents, young people and job seekers. We'll deliver an amazing promotional campaign to find you the best apprentices.

### Shortlisting

**25 – 26 August 2025**

Using our data-rich application process, we make it easy for you to shortlist the applicants you want to interview.

It's as easy as Airbnb!

### Interviews

**26 – 29 August 2025**

Time to meet your applicants. You undertake interviews and assessments that help you find the right apprentice.

### Offers made

**01 September 2025, from 9am**

You make offers to applicants and they know to get back to you quickly. With Workplus, there's no hanging around!

### Apprentices start

**September – October 2025 onwards**

Start dates will depend on the type of apprenticeship but most courses start in September & October. Time to see your apprentice shine!

Content available at <https://www.workplus.app/employers/apprenticeships>

## Creating Community

Applying for an apprenticeship as a young person can often feel like a solitary journey, especially if they receive limited support. However, there are established networks designed to foster connection and community among apprentices. For example, the Association of Apprentices' BuddyHub links apprentices with others in the industry, while Outer Circle's Aspiring Apprentice community offers a supportive peer environment. In fact, almost **1 in 5** of apprentices are involved in such networks, and many current and former apprentices have shared how valuable these connections have been in creating a sense of belonging<sup>33</sup>. UCAS' Unibuddy programme – enabling prospective students to speak directly with current students – demonstrates the power of peer-to-peer engagement<sup>34</sup>. **A similar model could be highly effective if integrated into a centralised platform for apprenticeships.** This would be particularly beneficial for newer apprenticeship programmes, offering prospective applicants authentic insights into different standards, entry requirements, progression routes, and everyday apprentice life – from peers just a step ahead in the journey.

“

'I was more alone in applying... It was a difficult process and what mainly helped me, I would say, are career support groups... and they talked about things that weren't [available elsewhere], so they were fully transparent as well... it's better to go to them rather than just using the random online video. The generic information is helpful, but there's better advice that could be given.'

Sales development apprentice at an e-commerce software company





'There's a lot of companies' applications that, when you don't get through – especially because of how competitive it is now, so I imagine this is worse – you're kind of just left with like an unfortunate e-mail and you have no clue how you can approve or what you did wrong. And that can be quite disheartening for some students that already may think they're not good enough. They have low self-esteem or whatever it might be. So, I think an improvement in feedback for those students would be very, very, very helpful, and I think we'd see an uptick in like apprenticeship applications.'

Former cybersecurity apprentice in a multinational technology company



'It was like definitely over 20 [applications]. But it was a mix of banks and tech companies mainly... I didn't really know what in technology I wanted to go into, to be honest.'

Former cybersecurity apprentice in a multinational technology company

## Monitoring Applications and Feedback

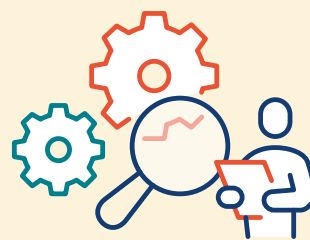
Currently, where an application is managed entirely on the Find an Apprenticeship website, all employers have to include written feedback when marking an application as unsuccessful. However, employers can simply choose not to resolve an application, leaving the applicant without feedback or an update on the outcome of their application.

Oversubscribed companies and resource-poor employers can struggle to offer detailed feedback to apprenticeship applicants, while this can also be an issue in cases where recruitment is managed by a training provider on behalf of the employer. But, both employers and young people recognise the detrimental impact this can have on candidates, which can lead to cyclical rejections.

**Support and resources for employers around writing effective feedback** (and job descriptions) should be available to employers and candidates; for example, how Skills Builder Partnership's **Universal Framework 2.0** can be used to indicate skills areas for development, utilising a common language that is already widely adopted in schools and colleges<sup>35</sup>.



## PART THREE: NEXT STEPS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY



We need to lift the barriers in the apprenticeship application process that are:

- A) Preventing schools and colleges from providing high-quality, impartial information about apprenticeships, as required by statutory guidance;
- B) Holding young people back from making first-class applications to their dream apprenticeship or putting them off applying altogether;
- C) Hindering employers – especially SMEs – from advertising opportunities externally and taking on young apprentices; and, ultimately
- D) Undermining mission-critical Government ambitions like the Youth Guarantee and reforms to the skills training landscape.

A one-stop shop for apprenticeships cannot be built overnight – nor should it be. To ensure long-term effectiveness, broad buy-in, and meaningful impact for both young people and employers, development must be iterative and informed by meaningful consultation. Throughout this report, we have set out where change is needed. Below, we outline our policy recommendations for Government in the short and medium-term.



# Recommendations

## IMMEDIATE CHANGES:

1

### Introduce external advertising as a condition of levy funding

In 2022-23, a new rule (E14.3) was introduced to the apprenticeship funding rules:

*'Whilst it is not mandatory for employers to use Recruit an apprentice<sup>36</sup>, it is a condition of funding for all main providers to offer this service where applicable (e.g. for new recruits into a business). Where an employer has declined the use of Recruit an apprentice, you must record the reason for this in the evidence pack.'<sup>37</sup>*

The following year, this requirement was moved out of the 2023-24 formal funding rules document and into the provider agreement<sup>38</sup>. The question about whether Recruit an Apprentice was made optional, rather than a compulsory field. As a result, usage of the Find an Apprenticeship service was no longer tracked or expected systematically.

**To improve transparency, equity, and visibility of apprenticeship opportunities, all employers accessing Growth and Skills Levy funds should be required to advertise their apprenticeship vacancies externally via the Government's Find an Apprenticeship service, or a new central platform, as a condition of funding.**

This would ensure that young people – particularly those without existing industry contacts or networks – have a fairer chance of discovering and applying for roles. In no way would this prohibit employers from continuing to recruit through their own connections with schools and colleges, training providers or networks, but the opportunity itself would be made publicly visible through a national, free-to-access platform. Integral to this recommendation will be **effectively communicating the change to employers** which Skills England should oversee. And, to ensure buy-in, this must be accompanied by **a clearer narrative** from Government about their vision for the apprenticeship system and post-16 system that employers can rally behind.



## 2

### Improvements to the Find an Apprenticeship service

Nonetheless, it would be unfair to re-introduce this requirement on employers to advertise on the Find an Apprenticeship service unless improvements were made to the platform to improve usability, visibility and trust in the service – especially among those who currently find it impenetrable. As we have suggested in this report, we think the Department for Education and Government Digital Service should:

- **Integrate existing resources**, such as Skills England's **Occupational Maps** to allow users to explore pathways and progression opportunities, and the content on the 'Before You Start' webpage (covering 'what is an apprenticeship' and explaining terms like the apprenticeship levels) and apprenticeships.gov.uk PDF guides (on how to apply and prepare for interview) to prevent duplication.
- In the medium term, the Department for Education and Skills England should **expand resources**, including multimedia content (e.g. short-form 'day in the life' video explainers, particularly across underrepresented sectors and professions), signposting to impartial guidance and wraparound support for young apprentices covering things like finances (e.g. bank accounts, savings, tax and pensions) and relocation (e.g. finding accommodation, council tax, households bills), and a peer-to-peer engagement function, akin to UCAS' Unibuddy for university students.



## MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES:

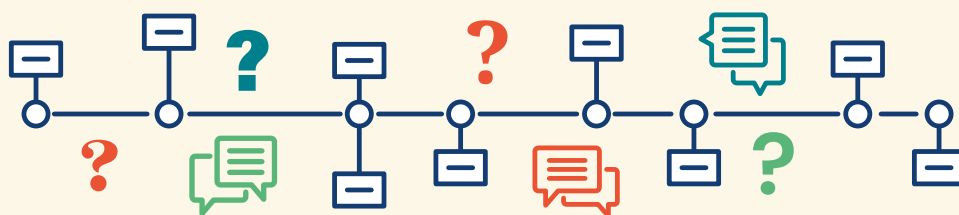


### Coordinate timelines and improve the application process

Once the one-stop shop platform has been improved and engagement is stronger, the next stage for the Department for Education with Skills England must be about reducing unnecessary complexity and introducing more consistency and coordination across the system:

- **Run a national campaign to promote alignment of application timelines with academic milestones**, supported by central guidance and a voluntary 'best practice' charter for employers (e.g. avoid peak exam periods). This will only be possible for employers with support to understanding their skills needs and the training offer (see Edge's *2025 Agents of Change report*) and certainty around the Government's plans to reform the Growth and Skills Levy and training landscape.
- **Pilot a 'talent pool' feature**, that builds on the existing 'register your interest' tool, allowing users to indicate interest in specific apprenticeships, sectors or employers and receive automatic alerts when relevant vacancies go live, and employers can identify suitable, interested candidates earlier. This could also involve a **'clearing' service** to help unsuccessful applicants find opportunities with other (perhaps smaller) companies with open vacancies.
- **Make creating an account easier** by removing two-factor authentication and including [guidance on why an account is useful](#) and [how to set one up](#), advertised directly above the search engine. Careers advisers should also have access to the account in the same way they do for UCAS in order to support students in their applications.

Crucially, these measures should be optional but default – retaining flexibility for employers with existing systems while offering structure to those who want it.



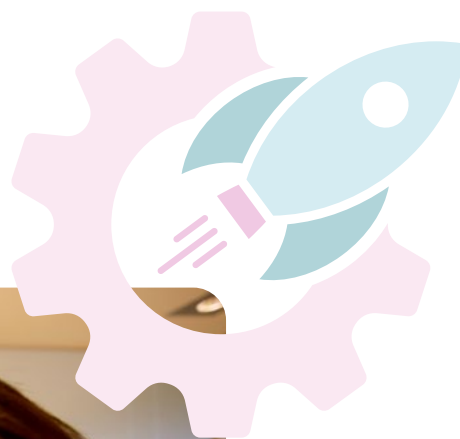


# CONCLUSION

Apprenticeships can be a powerful tool for social mobility, upskilling the workforce and driving productivity. But today's application system is not fit for purpose. It leaves young people unsupported, employers under-served, and opportunities hidden.

Through better coordination, smarter design, and clearer support, we can build a one-stop shop for apprenticeships that works for everyone. A platform that is simple, fair, and intuitive.

This is not just a technical fix. It is a question of equity, of ambition, and of ensuring every young person, regardless of their background, can take that crucial first step into a rewarding career. Let's stop asking young people and employers to work around the system. It's time to build one that works for them both.



# REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Careers and Enterprise Company, *Insight Briefing Gatsby Benchmark results for 2023/24*. Available at: [https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/i1ieae2n/1944-insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023\\_24-v7.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/i1ieae2n/1944-insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023_24-v7.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Careers and Enterprise Company, 2024, *Insight briefing: Student career readiness in 2023/24*. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/mntpofw1/fsq-insight-briefing-2023-24.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> Edge Foundation, 2024, *Student Voices: What Are Students Saying About Their Experiences of T Levels?* Available at: <https://www.edge.co.uk/research/projects/research-reports/student-voices-what-are-students-saying-about-their-experiences-of-t-levels/>
- <sup>4</sup> Department for Education, 2025, *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers>
- <sup>5</sup> The Sutton Trust, 2024, *Where next: What influences the choices of would-be apprentices?* Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/where-next-what-influences-the-choices-of-would-be-apprentices/>
- <sup>6</sup> Young Lives, Young Futures, King's College London, *Apprenticeships in England: findings and policy recommendations from the Young Lives, Young Futures study, Policy Brief No.3*. Available at: [https://www.ylyf.co.uk/\\_files/ugd/92717c\\_7c4a7ab21e0b4c2eae9930c0ec483351.pdf](https://www.ylyf.co.uk/_files/ugd/92717c_7c4a7ab21e0b4c2eae9930c0ec483351.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> Edge Foundation, 2024, *Advancing British Standards: Navigating the next decade of 16-19 education reform*. Available at: <https://www.edge.co.uk/news-and-events/blogs/advancing-british-standards-navigating-the-next-decade-of-16-19-education-reform/>
- <sup>8</sup> Amazing Apprenticeships, 2025, *How Confident are Parents and Carers in Supporting their Child Apply for Apprenticeships?*. Available at: <https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/how-confident-are-parents-and-carers-in-supporting-their-child-to-apply-for-apprenticeships/>
- <sup>9</sup> Mellor, J, FE Week, 2025, *'Short-sighted': DfE cuts ASK careers programme*. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/short-sighted-dfe-controversially-cuts-ask-careers-programme-funding/>
- <sup>10</sup> Edge Foundation, 2024, *Student Voices: What Are Students Saying About Their Experiences of T Levels?* Available at: <https://www.edge.co.uk/research/projects/research-reports/student-voices-what-are-students-saying-about-their-experiences-of-t-levels/>
- <sup>11</sup> Young Lives, Young Futures, King's College London, *Apprenticeships in England: findings and policy recommendations from the Young Lives, Young Futures study, Policy Brief No.3*. Available at: [https://www.ylyf.co.uk/\\_files/ugd/92717c\\_7c4a7ab21e0b4c2eae9930c0ec483351.pdf](https://www.ylyf.co.uk/_files/ugd/92717c_7c4a7ab21e0b4c2eae9930c0ec483351.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> Edge Foundation, 2024, *Flex Without Compromise - Preserving Apprenticeships for Young People Under a Growth and Skills Levy*. Available at: <https://www.edge.co.uk/policy/reports/flex-without-compromise/>
- <sup>13</sup> Media officer, 2024, *How to find and apply for an apprenticeship – The Education Hub*. Available at: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/how-to-find-apply-apprenticeship/>
- <sup>14</sup> Government Digital Service, 2011, *Find an apprenticeship*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
- <sup>15</sup> [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk). *Browse apprenticeships before you apply*. Available at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/browse-apprenticeships>

## References

---

- <sup>16</sup> Skills England, 2025. *Search the Apprenticeships*. Available at: <https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/>
- <sup>17</sup> Youth Employment UK, 2025. *Youth Voice Census Results 2025*.
- <sup>18</sup> The Careers and Enterprise Company, 2024. *Young people must be part of the apprenticeship conversation*. [online] Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/young-people-must-be-part-of-the-apprenticeship-conversation/>
- <sup>19</sup> Department for Work and Pensions, 2024. *Biggest employment reforms in a generation unveiled to Get Britain Working again*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/biggest-employment-reforms-in-a-generation-unveiled-to-get-britain-working-again>  
<https://sfadigital.blog.gov.uk/2016/01/25/find-an-apprenticeship-what-happened-next/>
- <sup>20</sup> Scale, A, 2016. *Find an apprenticeship - what happened next?* Available at: <https://sfadigital.blog.gov.uk/2016/01/25/find-an-apprenticeship-what-happened-next/>
- <sup>21</sup> Apprenticeships.gov.uk, 2025. *Download Your Apprenticeship app*. Available at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/download-your-apprenticeship-app>
- <sup>22</sup> Noble, J, FE Week, 2023. *DfE's website rejects apprenticeship adverts for using 'head' and 'man'*. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/dfes-website-rejects-apprenticeship-adverts-for-using-head-and-man/>
- <sup>23</sup> Youth Employment UK, 2025. *Youth Voice Census Results 2025*.
- <sup>24</sup> Office for National Statistics, *People aged 16 to 24 years, population and employment rates*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/peopleaged16to24yearspopulationandemploymentrates>
- <sup>25</sup> GOV.UK, 2023. *Become an apprentice*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/become-apprentice>
- <sup>26</sup> Apprenticeships.gov.uk, 2025. *Resource hub*. Available at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/resource-hub>
- <sup>27</sup> Education.gov.uk, 2025. *Occupational Maps: Skills England*. Available at: <https://occupational-maps.skillsengland.education.gov.uk/>
- <sup>28</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships, 2025. *Report 2024 | 2025*. Available at: [https://www.appgapprenticeships.uk/\\_files/ugd/21ee65\\_odb573e286994970a1594f667203c6f8.pdf](https://www.appgapprenticeships.uk/_files/ugd/21ee65_odb573e286994970a1594f667203c6f8.pdf)
- <sup>29</sup> Ministry of Defence, 2025. *Defence Industrial Strategy: Making Defence an Engine for Growth*, Command Paper 1388. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68bea3fc223d92d088f01d69/Defence\\_Industrial\\_Strategy\\_2025\\_-\\_Making\\_Defence-an-Engine-for-Growth.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68bea3fc223d92d088f01d69/Defence_Industrial_Strategy_2025_-_Making_Defence-an-Engine-for-Growth.pdf)
- <sup>30</sup> NI Skills Barometer Findings Report 'Skills in demand', 2015. Available at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Skills%20Barometer%20-%20Findings%20Report%20-%2020241115.pdf>
- <sup>31</sup> Department for the Economy, 2016. *Economy Minister announces 50 new civil engineering apprenticeships*. Available at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/economy-minister-announces-50-new-civil-engineering-apprenticeships>
- <sup>32</sup> Department for the Economy, 2025. *Economy Minister announces £600,000 funding to boost access to apprenticeships*. Available at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/economy-minister-announces-ps600000-funding-boost-access-apprenticeships>
- <sup>33</sup> Youth Employment UK, 2025. *Youth Voice Census Results 2025*.

## References

---

- <sup>34</sup> UCAS, 2024, *Connecting Futures: UCAS and Unibuddy's new online chat matches students for an inside look at uni life*. Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/news-and-key-documents/news/connecting-futures-ucas-and-unibuddys-new-online-chat-matches-students-inside-look-uni-life>
- <sup>35</sup> Skills Builder Partnership, 2025, *Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0*. Available at: <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework>
- <sup>36</sup> GOV.UK, 2021, *Recruit an apprentice*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-vacancies>
- <sup>37</sup> Department for Education, 2022, *Apprenticeship funding rules and guidance for employers - August 2022 to July 2023*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/642a925d7de82b001231342c/2223\\_Employer\\_Rules\\_Version\\_2\\_Final-Updated030423.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/642a925d7de82b001231342c/2223_Employer_Rules_Version_2_Final-Updated030423.pdf)
- <sup>38</sup> Hughes, G, 2023, Apprentify.com, *Changes Ahead: A Guide to the Apprenticeship Funding Rules for August 2023-2024*. Available at: <https://www.apprentify.com/media/blog/changes-ahead--a-guide-to-the-apprenticeship-funding-rules-for-august-2023-2024-2095>



