

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Apprenticeship Strategy 2015 -2017

Introduction:

One of the key economic objectives of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Economic Growth Strategy 2012-2026 is to “Develop a well skilled workforce to meet current and future local labour market needs” There are 33,000 businesses in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire; manufacturing alone employs around 50,000 people.

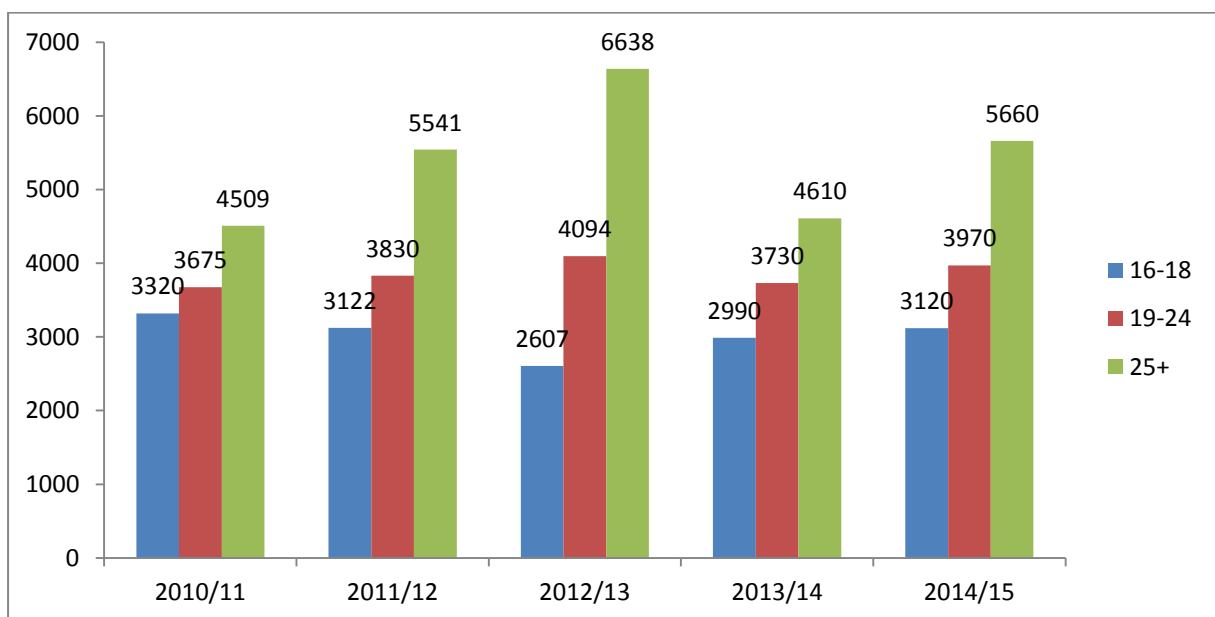


Apprenticeships are a key component in the drive to increase employability and growth and a main route for increasing participation in education and training.

This Apprenticeship Strategy details activity to complement and build on other skills initiatives and plans including the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Deal and the EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

It provides a clear focus on the priorities for Apprenticeship growth and how these priorities can be addressed by working collaboratively with all partners with an interest in apprenticeships and skills development.

LEP AREA APPRENTICESHIP STARTS:



Priorities for Apprenticeships:

Apprenticeships are not necessarily viewed as part of a career pathway which often prevents them from being seen as the skills option of choice for people and employers.

The aim is to make apprenticeships the skills option of choice for employers and people, especially for younger people. The main priorities are to;

1. Raise the profile of and promote the value of apprenticeships,
2. Develop an Apprenticeship Growth Plan which will support the businesses of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire in addressing their workforce development needs for the present and the future,
3. Improve Apprenticeship information, advice and guidance which will enable young people to make informed choices regarding their career pathways.
4. Promote quality of provision.

Each of the priorities has recommended key actions that enable all partners to undertake a range of activity to support the Apprenticeship growth agenda for the area.



Priority 1 - Raise the profile of and promote the value of Apprenticeships

Key Actions:

1.1. Increase activity to promote Apprenticeships, especially at level 3 and above;

- Apprenticeships to be promoted as a credible route into a good career which can also lead to progression into higher education,
- Use alternative ways to promote of the benefits of recruiting Apprentices to address skills needs to employers, especially within the priority sectors.
- Providers to ensure that progression pathways are always promoted to Apprentices to ensure career development.

1.2. Undertake work to develop the promotion of Apprenticeships linked to Higher Education;

- Produce strategies to stimulate growth in Higher Apprenticeships (Degree Apprenticeships),
- Local Universities to agree Apprenticeship pathways into specified Higher Education qualifications,
- Higher Apprenticeships to be promoted to employers and to their workforce as a progression route to HE,

- Challenge the poor perception, reputation, lack of information, advice and guidance regarding Apprenticeships especially in relation to parents and other advisers – Apprenticeships should not be seen as a second class option.

Priority 2 – Develop an Apprenticeship Growth Plan which will support the businesses of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire in addressing their workforce development needs for the present and the future.

Key Actions

2.1. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Education Trust will work in partnership with providers and other partners to identify the key skills gaps for the area,

- Identify how Apprenticeships can be used to address these gaps,
- Identify opportunities to grow the number of employers offering apprenticeships especially at high level technical standards to meet the current and future skills requirements.

2.2. Employers will be supported by providers and the Education Trust in understanding how Apprenticeships can help workforce development,

- Employer events will be held to support the understanding of the Apprenticeship Levy and how it should be used to develop employee skills levels,
- Employers will be made aware of externally funded training that may increase productivity, support business growth and increase employee satisfaction and retention,
- Providers will support employers in understanding how the new Apprenticeship standards can meet their workforce development needs.

2.3. The Education Trust will support the increase of the number of employers recruiting and employing Apprentices;

- Training provider collaboration will be encouraged to increase sector coverage so that the frameworks delivered match the job requirements more closely,
- Training providers will be encouraged to work together on producing an offer that ensures that they are meeting the skills needs of employers,
- Initiatives such as the Skills Hub, the Apprenticeship Hub and Ladder for Staffordshire, the Advanced Manufacturing Skills Hub, and ESF projects will contribute to Apprenticeship growth,
- New employers will be engaged through LEP/Education Trust business events, the Employer Ambassador Network and other partners will be encouraged to promote Apprenticeship recruitment via their own skills strategies and events.

Priority 3 - Support young people in knowing and understanding Apprenticeships as a post-16 participation route.

Key Actions

3.1. The Education Trust and partners will support schools in discharging their responsibility to provide access to independent and impartial careers advice and guidance;

- The Locality Project will help schools in developing relationships with employers which will enhance their careers guidance strategies and embed good information, advice and guidance practices in school.
- Ensure that websites accessed by young people contain engaging information to help their understanding of Apprenticeships and the benefits and opportunities that they offer,
- Increased use of social media to promote Apprenticeships and how to access further information,
- Schools and other influencers will have access to up to date and relevant information, including how to access further advice,
- Apprenticeship Ladder for Staffordshire will support young people in finding an appropriate apprenticeship that is right for them, therefore helping them to reach their potential.

3.3. Providers and partners to increase deliver of employability programmes and pre-apprenticeship programmes which equip young people with the skills they need to gain employment and meet the requirements of the Apprenticeship.

3.4. Increase the number of young people participating in Apprenticeships to meet requirements of Raising the Participation Age (RPA);

- Ensure that Apprenticeship are fully promoted as part of the September Offer,
- Use the Young Ambassador Network to share their positive apprenticeship experiences at careers events and during school visits.

3.5. Apprenticeship information will be shared with parents, careers professionals and other influencers

Priority 4 - Promoting Quality Provision

Key Actions

4.1. Apprenticeship quality will always be considered in all aspects of increased growth.

4.2 The quality of the Apprenticeship will continue to be promoted throughout the work of all partners, including the LEP Apprenticeship Recognition Awards and the Graduation Ceremony.



Photo – KMF Apprentices celebrating their graduation at the County showground July 2016