



First annual survey of Industry Apprentices

January 2014

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Industry Apprentice Council

... the voice of industry apprentices

CONTENTS

PAGE

3-4	Introduction from the IAC
5	Foreword from Julia Chippendale, EAL Managing Director
6	Foreword from Gordon Birtwistle MP
7	The survey categories
8-9	Executive summary
10-12	Section One: Demographic
13-15	Section Two: Careers Advice
16-18	Section Three: Your Apprenticeship
19-21	Section Four: Apprenticeship Perception
21	Contact

Introduction from the IAC...

The Industry Apprentice Council (IAC) was set up by EAL, the specialist awarding organisation for industry qualifications, to give apprentices a national voice for the first time.

The IAC has been the voice of industry apprentices for over a year now and has encouraged feedback and input from the wider industry apprentice community through its social media channels – Twitter and Facebook. However, it was time to ask apprentices directly key questions on issues that continue to arise in the apprenticeships landscape.

The IAC survey had a great response, with almost 600 industry apprentices having their say on their apprenticeship, the wider perception of apprenticeships and the future of the vocational route.

You will find the full findings in the following report, but some of the key results include:

- almost 99% said they are pleased they chose an apprenticeship
- nearly 97% said apprenticeships should lead to professional accreditation
- 40% of apprentices said they had inspired friends, family or colleagues to do an apprenticeship and a further 48% said some wish they had taken an apprenticeship
- almost 70% said friends and family think more highly of apprenticeships now
- 37% said the careers advice they received at school / college was poor or very poor and 7% didn't receive any at all.

One of the survey's most interesting findings was how effective apprentices themselves are in improving perceptions of apprenticeships among others. Within their immediate circle - friends and family – the impact on perceptions is extremely positive and significant. However, the challenge remains as to how to further amplify this effect and message beyond the close contacts of current apprentices. To achieve this, apprentices need the right platform from which to show the rest of the country who apprentices are and what they can achieve.

We believe these survey results will give us a stronger voice when we speak to parliamentarians, education organisations, employers and learning providers. But



equally, please continue to let us know your views and contact us via Twitter
@IAC_Apprentices and Facebook www.facebook.com/IndustryApprenticeCouncil.

Thank you for your support.

A. J. Mc *A. Stewart* *Jordan Phillips* *S. McDermott*
A. Arnold *J. Smith* *E. Carr* *D. King*
J. Ball *N. Harro* *D. Ferguson*

Members of the IAC



Foreword from Gordon Birtwistle MP, Government Apprenticeship Ambassador, Chair of Lib Dem Parliamentary Committee on Business, Innovation and Skills, and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships...

I started my working life as an apprentice and I have never looked back. Since receiving the role of Apprenticeship Ambassador, I have met hundreds of fabulous young people working hard and proving themselves as valuable assets to their companies. I was seriously impressed with the apprentices in the IAC. Each individual has their own success story and are a credit to themselves, their families and the companies they work for.



I am thrilled to be joined by the IAC in encouraging Apprenticeships for they are the future. Apprentices are the country's best kept secret but with the IAC our story can be spread more widely. We need to encourage schools, teachers, parents and companies that apprentices are assets and are contributing highly to the economic recovery.

It is vital that we continue to encourage apprenticeships in terms of both quality and quantity. If every business hired one apprentice, or took on one extra apprentice, we would reduce youth employment significantly. I am hoping to achieve this in my role as Government Apprenticeship Ambassador and am thrilled that the IAC are onside; advocating apprenticeships brilliantly.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Birtwistle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gordon Birtwistle MP

Foreword from Julia Chippendale, Managing Director of EAL...

The Industry Apprentice Council (IAC) was first brought together by EAL over a year ago and it has gone from strength to strength. We were acutely aware that apprentices are not listened to in the same way as higher education students and we wanted to give industry apprentices a national voice for the first time.

They have been using that voice to great effect: providing input for the recently launched Apprenticeships Implementation Plan; participating in discussions at the All Party Parliamentary Apprenticeships Group (APPAG); and contributing to numerous industry events.

The IAC's members are not only passionate about what they are doing but determined to be fully involved in the changing landscape of apprenticeships in the UK.

A year later and I am immensely proud of the IAC, its members and EAL's role in bringing them together and ensuring they are heard by decision makers. Their calibre and commitment sends a resounding message to the country about the importance and potential of apprentices.



Julia Chippendale



THE SURVEY CATEGORIES

Demographic

In order to understand who answered the survey, information on the demographic make-up of respondents was requested. This included: who they are, where they are from, what year of their apprenticeship they are in, their age, gender and the sectors they are working in. This information provides a picture of the apprentice community and gave context to the survey results.

Careers advice

Careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is high on the agenda for the Industry Apprentice Council (IAC), as many members were given little or no help from their school, college or careers advisors when they were making their career decisions post compulsory education. The IAC wanted to hear from the wider apprentice community about their experiences of CIAG, to inform their campaign to improve apprenticeships perception.

Your Apprenticeship

Finding out why an apprentice chose to do an apprenticeship and whether they were pleased with their decision to do so is very important in gauging satisfaction and whether the vocational route is worthwhile. The IAC also wanted to learn more about apprentices' aspirations, where their apprenticeship can lead and what they want to achieve in their career.

Apprenticeship perceptions

A key aim of the IAC is to change public perceptions of apprenticeships for the better – ensuring they are viewed as a number one pathway into skilled and fulfilling careers. Learning more about current perceptions and whether these have changed due to the apprentices' experiences of the vocational route is vital in understanding how apprentices can improve apprenticeships on a national scale. The IAC believes the best people to change perceptions of apprenticeships are apprentices themselves, so listening to their experiences and views is important.

The Industry Apprentice Council Survey 2013 Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey results paint a picture of the current careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) landscape in the UK, as seen by apprentices. The lack of CIAG is something the Industry Apprentice Council (IAC) has already highlighted and, through the survey, almost 600 industry apprentices have added their voice to the call for improvements.

Results show a lack of support for young people in schools who are interested in the apprenticeships pathway – or any pathway other than higher education – despite almost all apprentices being pleased with their choice.

The evidence also shows apprentices are the best people to promote apprenticeships, as the vast majority of family, friends and colleagues thought more highly of apprenticeships based on their experiences, with many inspired to take up an apprenticeship themselves. The IAC has been in contact with government about providing a platform to allow apprentices to promote the pathway more widely. This level of national representation and support was also addressed in the survey. Results showed 63% want a national representative body of their own, while 35% said the NUS should represent them as well as students.

When it came to apprenticeship related careers advice, less than 9% of the 571 respondents said they found out about their apprenticeship through either their teacher or careers advisor. The numbers drop to 6% for both those who found out via either careers fairs or the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). More than 50% said their own initiative was the key to learning about apprenticeships, with more than 35% using online research and 24% through a family member. Indeed, 13.4% said a suggestion from their parents was the catalyst, while 15% said a friend.

Less than 9% of current industry apprentices found out about apprenticeships from their teachers or careers advisors

It was also revealed that less than a quarter of apprentices were encouraged to follow the apprenticeship pathway by their

school or college. Nearly 40% of those that responded to the survey said the careers advice they received in school or college was either poor or very poor, with a further 7% claiming they did not receive any advice or guidance at all. Only 24% rated their school or college's careers information, advice or guidance as good or very good.

Apprentices' poor experiences of careers advice could be explained by the status of apprenticeships within their school or college. Apprenticeships, compared with

further or higher education, were far from the limelight. 62% of respondents said higher education was perceived as the number one pathway to aim for, while 20% said further education. Only 4% said apprenticeships were viewed as a number one route following compulsory education.

Despite this, the survey results do highlight some positives, particularly in changing perceptions. The majority of apprentices found that their experience of apprenticeships had changed their friends' and families' perceptions. More than 69% said their friends and family think more highly of apprenticeships based on their experiences. 40% said some of their friends, family or colleagues had even started apprenticeships since, and another 50% said they now wished they had taken an apprenticeship.

More than 69% said their friends and family think more highly of apprenticeships based on their experiences.

And why had friends and family been inspired by the apprentices they know?

Perhaps because apprentices are happy with the choices they have made – with a

Almost 99% apprenticeship satisfaction rating, compared to 85% overall satisfaction in HE

99% apprenticeship satisfaction rating, compared to 85% overall satisfaction rating in higher education*. Despite around half being unaware of the full range of careers that would be available to them in industry, the job prospects are a leading influence on why they had taken up an apprenticeship.

This was followed by the ability to earn and

learn, gain further qualifications, practical learning and avoiding debt, such as university tuition fees.

A full breakdown of the IAC survey figures can be found in the following pages.

“Apprenticeships are a gateway to an exciting and fulfilling career, as well as a vast range of qualifications, life skills and experiences that will stand us in good stead for our career.”

Lizzie Moffatt, IAC member and Vauxhall apprentice

*Source: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2013/news82928.html>

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC

The Industry Apprentice Council was founded by specialist industry awarding organisation EAL and primarily consists of apprentices within the industry sectors that EAL supports. Being backed by the leading awarding organisation for engineering qualifications in the UK, the IAC has established itself as the voice of industry apprentices. The IAC is also sponsored by IMI Awards, the leading awarding body for the retail motor industry.

The survey, therefore, focussed on this demographic and a series of “filter” questions were used to ensure that respondents were from an engineering and manufacturing, automotive, building services, construction, logistics and energy and utilities background.

“Articulate, passionate, intelligent, committed, exuberant and dedicated to ensuring apprenticeships are rightfully seen as a first class pathway into industry careers. The IAC’s fresh ideas and excitement are infectious and inspiring in equal measure.”

Julia Chippendale, EAL Managing Director

Results

The IAC survey was completed by 571 apprentices from a wide range of companies – from SMEs through to large multi-national organisations, including Rolls-Royce, Ford, Atkins, Airbus, Balfour Beatty, GE Caledonian, GKN Aerospace and Kwik Fit. Respondents were further analysed to reveal the following:

Gender

MALE	FEMALE
85.2%	14.8%

Age

AGE	Percentage of respondents
Under 16	0.2% (did not pass onto further questions)
16-18 years old	29.4%
19-24 years old	62%
25-31 years old	5.2%
32+ years old	3.1%

*0.2% did not progress as they stated they were under 16 years of age

Apprenticeship year

Apprenticeship Year	Percentage of respondents
Year 1	22.2%
Year 2	29.3%
Year 3	29.8%
Year 4	13.5%
Higher than Year 4	1.2%

*4% did not progress as they stated they were not undertaking an apprenticeship

Location

Region	Percentage of respondents
South West	14.5%
South East	21.1%
London	2.3%
East of England	7.3%
West Midlands	7.0%
East Midlands	16.4%
Yorkshire and the Humber	2.8%
North West	10.1%
North East	2.6%
Wales	10.1%

Scotland	5.9%
Northern Ireland	0%

Sector

Sector	Percentage of respondents
Engineering and manufacturing – including aerospace, rail, space, electrical and electronics, fabrication, welding, metals, materials processing, marine, mechanical, maintenance and toolmaking	66.6%
Automotive – including body repair, air conditioning, motorsports, automotive management, customer services and business administration	16.4%
Building services – including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, heating and ventilating, refrigeration and air conditioning	5.6%
Construction – including building construction, civil engineering, architectural engineering and specialist construction activities such as demolition, plastering, joinery, painting, glazing, floor and wall covering, and roofing	1.4%
Logistics – including warehousing, storage, logistics operations, plant operations and port operations	1.2%
Energy and utilities – including gas, low carbon, power, waste management, and water	2.5%

*6.3% did not progress as they were not involved in the sectors stated above

SECTION 2: CAREERS ADVICE

Careers information, advice and guidance has been highlighted as consistently lacking in terms of what is available for aspiring apprentices – or those who simply want other options as well as the higher education pathway. These are the experiences of the majority of IAC members, with only one receiving positive support and advice before taking up their apprenticeship. The remaining thirteen were underwhelmed by the support they received or even actively discouraged by their teachers and careers advisors when they decided to go down the vocational route.

Many of the IAC members have spoken to their colleagues about their school and college experiences and the feedback is always the same – higher education was seen as the golden pathway and the vast majority of the time, the only pathway promoted to them.

The IAC has chosen to place CIAG as central to its future activities – aiming to boost the level of support that pupils get if they want to explore pathways other than higher education. This is not just about ensuring that schools provide enough information so that pupils and parents can make an informed choice, but about changing preconceived ideas and perceptions of apprenticeships in general.

“By making apprenticeships a gold standard option for ambitious young people, we are sending a message that technical excellence is as highly valued as academic prowess.”

Prime Minister David Cameron

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-well-make-apprenticeships-a-gold-standard-option-for-ambitious-young-people>

Results

1. How did you find out about your apprenticeship? (Tick all those that apply)



#IACSurvey



Method	Percentage of respondents
My own initiative	50.5%
Online research	35.5%
National Apprenticeship Service (online or face-to-face at an event)	6.4%
My careers advisor	8.8%
My teacher	8.7%
A careers fair	5.8%
A friend	14.5%
A family member	23.9%
My parents' suggestion	13.4%
Job Centre Plus	0.7%
Other – please specify (see appendix A – available upon request)	12.7%

2. Please indicate the extent to which you were encouraged to do an apprenticeship by your school / college

Answer	Percentage of respondents
I was discouraged to undertake an apprenticeship	17.6%
I was neither encouraged or discouraged	59.3%
I was encouraged to undertake an apprenticeship	23.1%

3. What career options did your school or college explain to you?

Answer	Explained	Not explained
Higher education	87.8%	12.2%
Further education	86.6%	13.4%
Full-time work	44.8%	55.2%
Apprenticeships	43.9%	56.1%
Other – please specify (see appendix B – available upon request)	-	-

4. How would you rate the careers information, advice and guidance you received at school / college?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
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I didn't receive any information, advice or guidance	6.7%
Very poor	13.4%
Poor	23.8%
Reasonable	33.4%
Good	18.6%
Very good	4.2%

SECTION 3: YOUR APPRENTICESHIP



#IACSurvey



The best people to promote apprenticeships are apprentices themselves. This is the view of the IAC and no one who has heard a passionate apprentice speak at an education event around the UK would disagree. However, in order to promote apprenticeships, it is essential that they are pleased with the choice they have made. It is also important to know why they wanted to do any apprenticeship in the first place, what it has already given them and what opportunities it will provide in future.

All members of the IAC are in agreement about one thing – their apprenticeships were the best choice for them. And they believe it is an excellent pathway into highly skilled and fulfilling careers for many others as well - earning while learning, job prospects, no stuffy lectures, no debt and, most importantly, jobs. While they are in agreement that apprenticeships are a fantastic career pathway, they wanted to know if the wider community felt the same way. Not only that, but they wanted to know if apprentices were provided with the same job opportunities and opportunities for progression.

“I believe the whole apprentice and learner community can benefit from everyone sharing their experiences and helping to improve the vocational pathway.”

Ashley Amatt, IAC member and Rolls-Royce apprentice

Results



5. What influence did the following have on your decision to do an apprenticeship?

Answer	No influence	Some influence	Strong influence
The job prospects	3.6%	21.5%	75.2%
The ability to earn while learning	3.3%	22.4%	74.3%
Greater focus on practical learning	4.8%	32.4%	63.6%
Getting further qualifications	4.2%	29.9%	65.9%
Avoiding debt (such as paying university tuition fees)	18.1%	27.7%	55.3%

6. Were you aware of the variety of careers available in industry before you started your apprenticeship?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes – I already knew there was a wide range of career opportunities in industry	36.9%
I knew of some opportunities but didn't realise how many options there were until I started my apprenticeship	53.3%
I had no idea of the range of industry careers available before I started my apprenticeship	9.9%

7. Are you pleased you chose to do an apprenticeship?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes – it was the best decision for me	98.5%
No – please explain (see appendix C – available upon request)	1.5%

8. Does your apprenticeship provide opportunities to progress onto further qualifications? For example, higher level NVQs, a degree or masters? Please tick the option that applies most closely to you.

Answer	Percentage of respondents
No – when I have completed my apprenticeship there is no automatic option to do further qualifications	3.3%
Possibly – it depends on other factors	29.5%
Yes – when I have finished my apprenticeship I am given the option to continue onto other qualifications	46.3%
Yes – when I signed up to my apprenticeship, I	20.9%

was guaranteed the opportunity to achieve a degree level qualification

9. Do you think apprenticeships should lead to professional accreditation as standard upon completion – such as registered technician status in engineering, for example?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	96.5%
No – please explain (see appendix D – available upon request)	3.5%

10. Where do you hope to be in five years' times? (Please tick all that apply)

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Still working at the same company	64.2%
Working in a different company	10.1%
In a management or higher position	51.9%
Working in a different sector / industry entirely	4.2%
Running / starting up my own business	13.4%
Inspiring school leavers to take up apprenticeships	23.3%
Other – please specify (see appendix E – available upon request)	4.2%

SECTION 4: APPRENTICESHIP PERCEPTION

The IAC has been meeting for over a year now and the perception of apprenticeships in the UK and how it can be changed continues to be high on our agenda. Apprentices are the best people to promote apprenticeships and show the rest of the country the calibre of apprentices and the career paths they open up.

Gone are the days when an apprentice was a teenager in dirty overalls, tinkering away on an engine day after day under the watchful eye of their mentor.

Apprenticeships are so much more now. Apprenticeships are rigorous, involve a wide-range of learning, not to mention new statutory requirements for time away from the workplace, and can lead to higher level qualifications such as degrees. Some apprenticeships are more highly subscribed than places at Oxford and Cambridge.

Admittedly, some businesses and apprenticeship schemes struggle to gain high quality applicants. This is because school leavers are relentlessly being pushed in the direction of university, leaving those without the right qualifications to look elsewhere. While apprenticeships can and should play an important role in reducing youth unemployment – as well as help those not academically inclined to achieve a good level of English, maths and skills to kick start their career – they should not be seen as a second class option, relevant only for those who did not get the grades for university.

Apprenticeships are equal to higher education and should be seen as such. Government is doing a lot to ensure apprenticeships are rigorous – with minimum duration requirements of a year and compulsory learning away from the workplace, for example – and this is helping to change perceptions. But there is more that can be done and apprentices are key to continued and positive change.

“School mainly focussed on university education, and had little time for anything else unless you were interested. Apprenticeships were not promoted in my school.”

Apprentice respondent to the IAC Survey

Results



11. Having taken the apprenticeship pathway, have you inspired others (such as your friends, family or colleagues) to do the same?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes – some have started apprenticeships	39.5%
Some wish they had taken an apprenticeship	48.2%
No – my apprenticeship has not influenced others to follow in my footsteps	12.3%

12. Do you think industry apprenticeships carry greater weight than apprenticeships in other sectors?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes – I believe my apprenticeship is more rigorous than other apprenticeships	75.7%
No – apprenticeships are all the same	15.1%
I don't know	9.2%

13. Do you think some apprenticeships bring down the reputation of apprenticeships nationwide?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	56.3%
No	34.9%
I don't know	8.9%

14. How do you think your school or college perceived apprenticeships compared to further and higher education?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Higher education was seen as the number one pathway to aim for	61.6%
Further education was seen as the number one pathway to aim for	19.8%
Vocational routes (including apprenticeships) were seen as the number one pathway to aim for	3.9%
All career routes were seen as equal	14.8%

15. Have your friends or family's perceptions of apprenticeships changed since you became an apprentice?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes – they think more highly of apprenticeships now	69.3%
No – their opinion of apprenticeships have not changed	28.5%
Yes – they think less of apprenticeships now	2.2%

16. The National Union of Students (NUS) represents higher and further education students. Do you think apprentices should have a similar national representative body?

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes – it's important that apprentices should have their own national representative body	62.6%
I think the NUS should represent apprentices as well as students	35.7%
No – please explain (see appendix F – available upon request)	1.7%

CONTACT

For queries about the survey please contact Sam Schofield on sschofield@ontapcommunications.com or 01246 582829.