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Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships: Research summary

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Abstract

Analyses reveal that alongside occupational segregation by gender in Apprenticeships, there is also significant under-representation of ethnic minority groups. This research was designed to supply detailed insight into under-representation in Apprenticeships by gender and ethnicity, to capture information about the decisions made by young people, and to examine employer practices in case recruitment strategies or unconscious bias could act as barriers. A first stage of work assessed the influence of recent policy developments; examined relevant, current research evidence; explored secondary data sources, such as the Individual Learner Record and Apprentice Pay Survey; and captured the views of strategic staff in the Apprenticeship system. A second stage comprised a large programme of interviews with careers advisers, teachers, training provider/college staff, apprentices and employers. The report synthesises the research, highlighting the impacts on diversity of the expansion of the programme, and why greater equality and diversity should be a concern. It explores the nature of the barriers encountered by different groups and draws together the evidence on what is effective in overcoming these barriers. Finally, recommendations are made for how the range of stakeholders in the Apprenticeship system can take action to increase interest in Apprenticeships and reduce barriers to access generally, as well as specifically act to promote the greater inclusion of young women and ethnic minority groups.

Foreword

Quality and equality are two aspects of the Apprenticeship experience that go hand-in-hand. They should both be given the highest priority. A good Apprenticeship programme will include strategies to ensure that Apprenticeships are accessible to the widest possible demographic and diverse spread of people. Unionlearn has consistently called for people from disadvantaged groups to be able to take up and complete high-quality Apprenticeships.

This research presents a comprehensive overview of the challenges and barriers surrounding under-representation in Apprenticeships. It demonstrates how all the available data reveals that women, ethnic minorities and disabled people face significant barriers in accessing high quality provision. The research links what we already know about gender inequality in Apprenticeships with a new and detailed look at how apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds are not being given opportunities to access Apprenticeships.

While there appears to be a gender balance in Apprenticeships overall, in reality men and women train in markedly different sectors, reflecting and emphasising occupational segregation in the workforce generally. Women are significantly under-represented in high-quality sectors such as engineering (less than 4 per cent), while men are under-represented in low-pay sectors such as the children's and young people's workforce (6.9 per cent). Entry into Apprenticeships should be a means of reducing such segregation but there is little sign of a more diverse mix among apprentices.

This pattern of gender participation tends to hold or is accentuated across ethnic groups – again only 3.2 per cent of learners on engineering Apprenticeships are from ethnic groups – and there are consequences from it in respect of outcomes of pay and conditions. At first glance the Apprenticeship Pay Survey data suggest that women and ethnic minorities are paid, on average, more than male and white apprentices. In reality the reverse is true once age and conversion to Apprenticeship from an existing job are stripped out of the figures. These facts and figures are contained in the companion report to this one, published by the Institute for Employment Studies.

The detailed section on the expansion of Apprenticeships in terms of government action shows how there has been relatively little progress in tackling these barriers, despite various initiatives and policy incentives. Additionally, the in-depth literature review brings together the breadth of academic study on both subjects together for the first time.

The research sets out a compelling picture of the challenges facing women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds in accessing Apprenticeships. It outlines a series of recommendations to overcome gender stereotyping and ethnic under-representation. These recommendations are thorough and wide-ranging.

Unionlearn will be helping unions to act on the recommendations and to ensure that the widely acknowledged role of trade union representatives in supporting disadvantaged groups to access training at work is equally applicable to Apprenticeship provision. We will also be helping unions to encourage employers to recruit a more diverse mix of apprentices. As the report itself says, many of the necessary actions are well established but need emphasising. Far more urgency is needed with regard to these challenges and a fundamental rethink needs to happen about how these changes can happen, and crucially, be embedded into practice.

The research provides compelling reading. Everyone involved in Apprenticeships, from policymakers to practitioners, should read this report. We should all consider how the findings and recommendations can be acted upon to ensure an Apprenticeship programme that works for the widest possible demographic and diverse spread of people. Unionlearn looks forward to working with government, the National Apprenticeship Service, employers, unions and other stakeholders to ensure that Apprenticeships are genuinely open to all.

Tom Wilson
Director, unionlearn

Introduction

While there has been a policy focus on addressing under-representation in Apprenticeships, particularly by gender, over many years, it is apparent that progress is slow. There is a continued need to focus on inequalities to ensure that:

∎ young people are equally able to benefit from the excellent opportunities provided by Apprenticeships

∎ each young person can access the best route for their needs in order to reach their full potential

∎ young people are assisted in the achievement of positive economic and social outcomes.

This project was designed to supply information about under-representation by gender and among ethnic minority groups in the Apprenticeship programme overall. While many occupational frameworks within the Apprenticeship programme are strongly gender segregated, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented in high-quality Apprenticeship frameworks.

The research explored the decisions made by young people about their careers in general, and about pursuing Apprenticeships in particular. Employer practices were examined to determine whether any bias exists within the recruitment process or whether there are strategies that serve to exclude ethnic minority groups. The perspectives of providers, schools and other stakeholders including those who support apprentices in the workplace such as union learning representatives (ULRs) were sought in order to provide information about the careers guidance and support available at each stage of young people's experience to offer a steer about what further careers guidance and support may be required.

Figure 1: Overview of the research approach
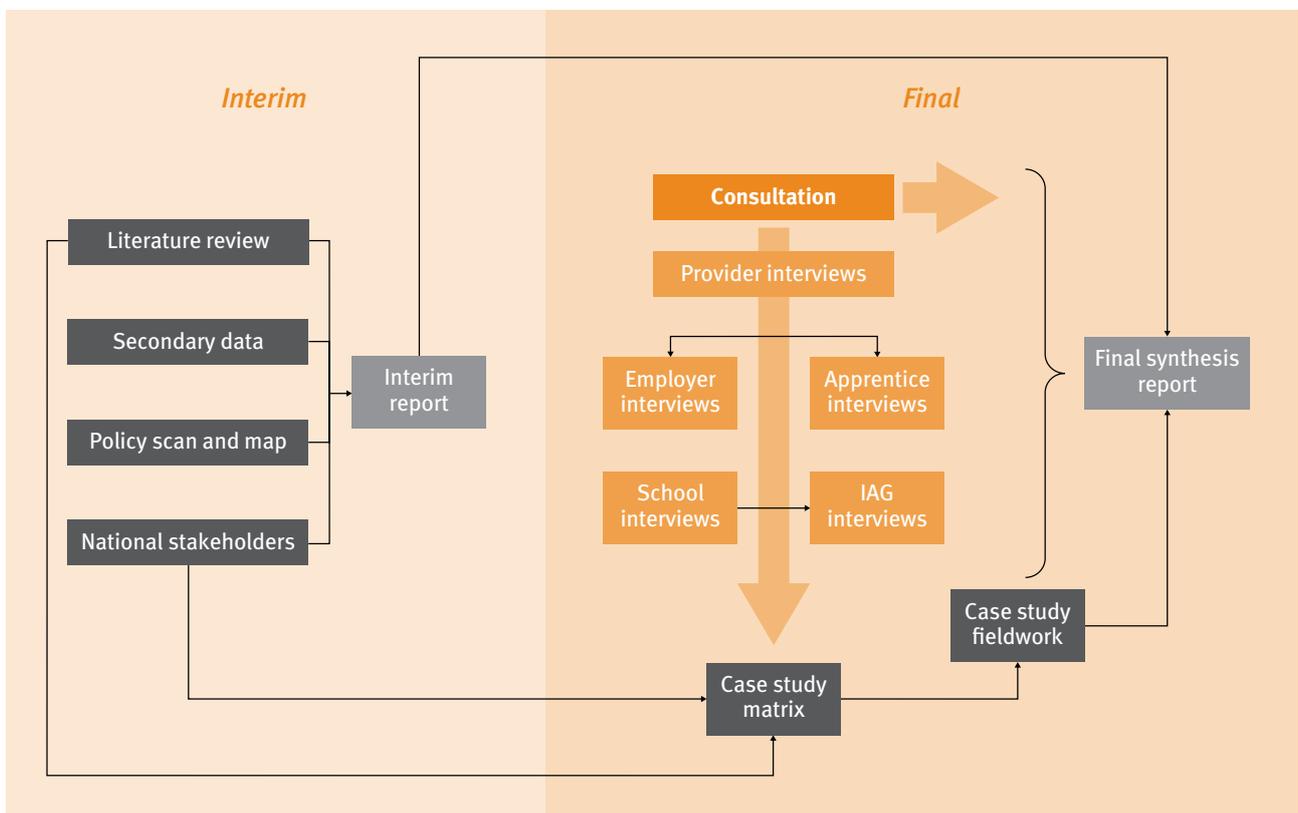
Source: Williams *et al* (2013)

The research evidence was gathered through a range of activities, as shown in Figure 1 (left). These included analysis of current and recent research reports and articles, exploration of the influences of recent policy developments on gender and ethnic minority representation in Apprenticeships, a review of secondary data sources and discussions with strategic staff in the Apprenticeship system. These analyses were contained in an interim report and subsequently used as the basis for consultation with key commentators and stakeholders within the Apprenticeship system, including an 'expert forum' and consultations with union staff. Following this, a large programme of qualitative research was undertaken, which involved what were termed 'operational stakeholders', meaning those directly involved in delivery of Apprenticeships or setting young people on the pathway towards an Apprenticeship, which included staff in schools, careers guidance providers, colleges and training providers and, crucially, young people engaged in Apprenticeships.

The primary and secondary research for this study was completed between September 2012 and June 2013 with consultation on the analysis and draft recommendations continuing into summer and early Autumn 2013.

The purpose of this research summary is to draw out, synthesise and provide a thematic examination of the key points from the full research report by Williams J, Foley B and Newton B (2013) called *Under-representation by Gender and Race in Apprenticeships*, available from www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/report.php?id=503

It provides signposts to the sections and chapters where the relevant, detailed evidence can be found in the full report. Policy implications are identified based on the research and relevant recommendations are made and included in this summary.

The expansion of Apprenticeships and its effect on diversity

The expansion of Apprenticeships has increased age diversity

Policy developments over the last 10 years are reviewed in light of the numbers starting on the Apprenticeship programme annually in Chapter 2 of the full research report. A step-change in the number of Apprenticeship starts is seen in the 2009–10 academic year (see Figure 2 below) following the policy decision to expand the programme; the greatest increase was seen among individuals aged 25 and over. Fuller and Unwin (2012a, 2012b) (section 4.2.6) have attributed this to the withdrawal of Train to Gain funding, which previously had provided free training up to Level 3 to individuals in employment (see Chapter 2). From 2010, funding that would have supported Train to Gain was directed towards Apprenticeships; this led to massive growth in take-up among individuals aged 25 and over. Fuller and Unwin (2012b) call this the 'conversion' of existing employees to apprentices and note that these individuals gain qualifications or units based on work they are already doing, rather than

Figure 2: Effects on diversity arising from expansion
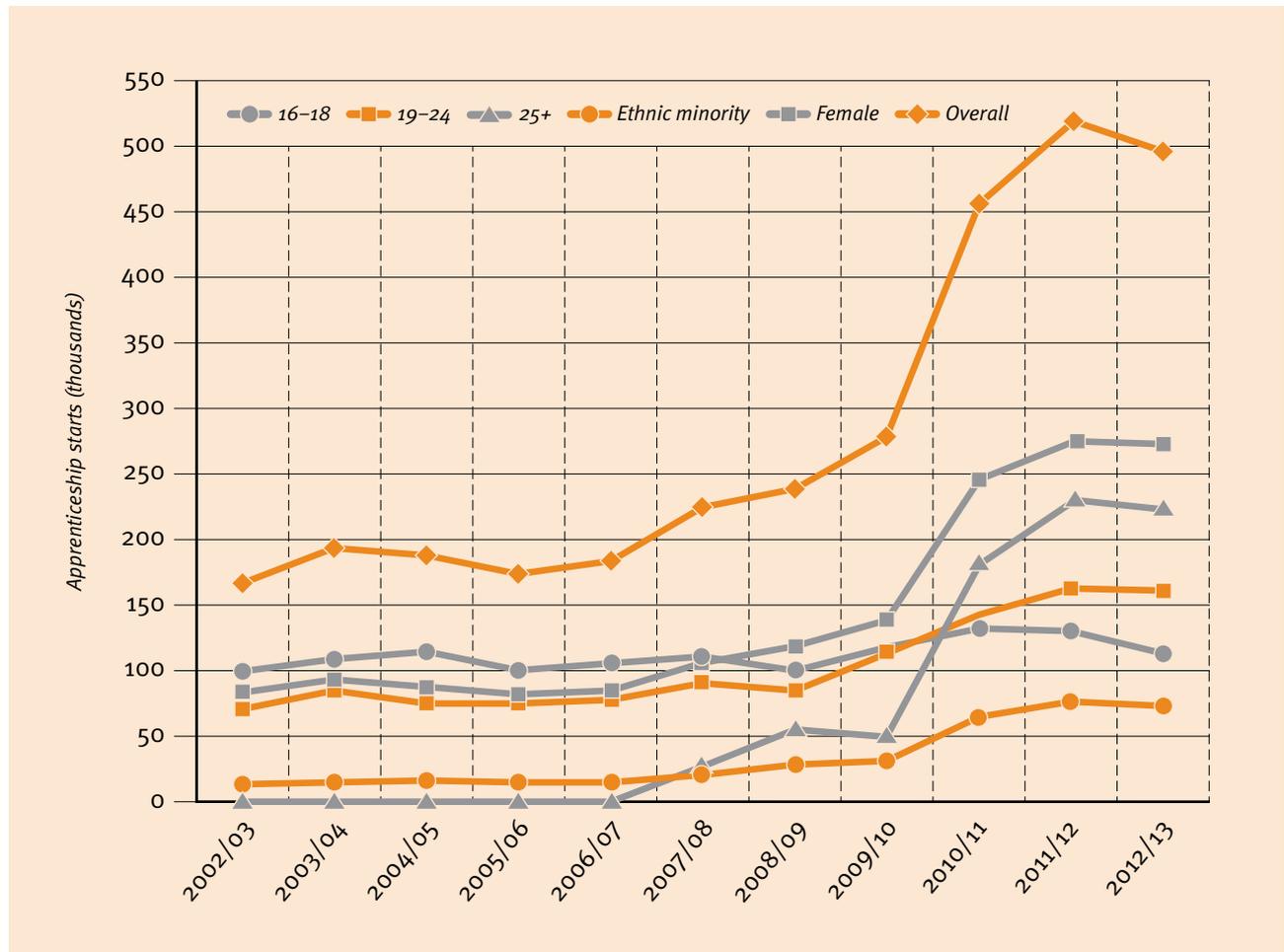
Source: Williams *et al* (2013)

being trained to perform their job: "Our point here is not to denigrate this process, but to stress that it is not the same as following an Apprenticeship" (Fuller and Unwin 2012a). The Richard Review (2012) has made recommendations that would exclude conversions from the Apprenticeship programme, through ensuring that apprentices, and the jobs they perform, require training to achieve full productivity (see Chapter 2).

Yet expansion has had a limited effect on other aspects of diversity

Figure 2 above shows a simplistic, though telling, picture of the equality and diversity effects of the expansion of the Apprenticeship programme, charting the trends for the three key age groups in Apprenticeships, as well as by gender and ethnicity in programme starts. It shows:

- rapid growth in starts among older adults, largely following the step-change expansion of Apprenticeships

- growth in Apprenticeships among females closely aligned to the expansion step-change trend and the trend among over 25s, which can attributed to the prevalence of conversions among women employees

- very limited growth in starts among 16- to 18-year-olds, seen by policymakers as a target group for expansion, and little effect of the expansion step-change on this group

- measured growth among 19- to 24-year-olds

- limited growth in ethnic minority numbers involved in the programme, most similar to the trend among 16- to 18-year-olds.

A more detailed analysis of 'starts' based on individual learner record (ILR) data is presented in Chapter 3 (section 3.1 of the full research report), which compares apprentices to the population using Census 2011 data. This allows the examination of the trends when diversity characteristics are considered in combination. It shows that gender segregation within Apprenticeship frameworks cuts across ethnic and cultural identities and that ethnicity compounds the impact of occupational gender segregation. National stakeholders (Chapter 5) and providers (section 6.2.2) attribute this effect, in part, to cultural and religious restrictions on the nature of work that women from some ethnic minority

groups can do and who it is considered appropriate for them to mix with in the workplace, a point that is consistent with previous research (section 4.1).

The analysis shows that women predominate in Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships, irrespective of ethnicity (section 3.1.2). There is a developing view among providers that Higher Apprenticeships are overcoming, rather than compounding, the diversity challenges seen at Intermediate, and less so at Advanced, levels (see section 6.2.5) and are a means to tackle the esteem and parity of Apprenticeships in relation to higher education. While the ILR data analysis (Chapter 3) does not show any particular change in trends in Higher Apprenticeships this may reflect the time lag between data being published and the day-to-day reality of providers' experience.

However, this gender dimension to Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships is important when the picture of current Apprenticeships is explored. ILR analysis shows that Apprenticeships are currently dominated by training at the Intermediate level. The ILR data also confirms that female apprentices are older than their male counterparts, suggesting that their current job has been converted to an apprentice role. On the one hand, this should lead to concern about the differential impact of removal of 'conversions' on male and female apprentices. An impact assessment of Apprenticeship policies (DfE 2008) (section 4.2.1) noted that women were under-represented overall in the programme. By 2011 this was no longer the case (section 3.1) but this is in large part due to females being more likely to become apprentices as a result of 'conversion'. On the other hand, the removal of 'conversions' from the programme aims to drive up quality so, while it risks a reversion to the under-representation of women in the programme overall, they will no longer be over-represented in Apprenticeships that are judged to be of lower quality. If women are predominant in Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships, concerns over their overall presence in the programme may be reduced.

Success rates are up, but there are concerns with respect to diversity

Overall success rates in Apprenticeships have increased in recent years (section 3.1.7). In line with this, success rates for female apprentices have improved and the gap in success between those who have, and those who do not have, a learning disability or difficulty has narrowed. However, success rates vary by ethnicity: white and Asian apprentices have the highest success rates while apprentices from black or mixed ethnic backgrounds have the lowest rates of success (see section 3.1.7 of the full research report).

This 'performance' trend is similar to that seen in Key Stage 4 and is reported in earlier evidence reviews of equality and diversity in Apprenticeships (see section 4.1). It is unlikely that Apprenticeships alone can address the challenges faced by young people who have struggled at school. It is challenging, however, to assess, on the basis of the available data, how far low prior attainment among some ethnic minority groups is acting as the key barrier to Apprenticeships. Analysis of the prior qualifications of those starting Apprenticeships shows no clear trends, though this analysis raises questions about the number of apprentices of any ethnicity or gender repeating their prior level of study while training, rather than pursuing training at a higher level (section 3.5.2). What it is possible to say, though, is that non-white learners are far more represented in the applicant data than in the Apprenticeship start data (see section 3.4). This suggests that ethnic minority learners have an ambition to become employed as an Apprenticeship but that some bottleneck or barrier is preventing their access. In contrast, females have a lower than expected share within the applicant data, though this may be attributed to the high rate of conversion seen among women starting Apprenticeships.

With the policy aim to 'raise the bar' such that Apprenticeships delivered at Advanced and Higher levels become the dominant model (an ambition first put forward by Leitch 2006 and now supported by Richard 2012, see Chapter 2), the trends in success rates may see little change since opportunities to take up Apprenticeships may become constrained for young people with lower attainment levels. A key comment drawn from the evidence review on this point concerns the overall success rate that should be expected of the programme. Hogarth *et al* (2009), who are cited in the 2012 Review of Apprenticeship Research, suggest that achieving 100 per cent completion is neither feasible nor desirable in the "face of a policy [which] aims to increase participation and representation of particular equality groups in Apprenticeships".

Why does equality and diversity in Apprenticeships matter?

Fuller and Unwin (forthcoming) (section 4.2.2 of the full research report) highlight that, while gender differences in Apprenticeship sectors may be reflective of segregation in the broader labour market, gender equality in Apprenticeships must remain a concern. The continued mirroring of workforce trends serves to compound female dominance in sectors where it is difficult to progress and, since sector influences the wages that apprentices attract, contributes to the overall lower wage rates seen among women workers. The TUC (2008) shares this concern, noting that women "miss out on high quality programmes and are more likely to have poor pay and conditions".

There is less commentary in the evidence and interviews about why ethnic minority under-representation in Apprenticeship matters; the key point is that some ethnic minority individuals may be missing out on a career route that suits their needs better than, for example, traditional academic pathways. Beyond this, Butler (2012) notes that, "increasing representation in Apprenticeships would offer a positive start to tackling... [the] unemployment currently blighting so many ethnic minority young people" (section 4.2.1). From discussions with employers (section 6.3.3), there are indications of the main motivations for becoming more ethnically inclusive that concern the business case: employers are considering whether they have access to the full talent pool if ethnic minority individuals are under-represented within their Apprenticeships. Employers also believe that it is in their interests to reflect their customer base as well as the community served by the business (section 6.6.3). Skills Development Scotland (2011) confirms that these benefits arise from more inclusive recruitment (section 4.3.6).

However, discrimination is rightly a concern since it has a profound effect on under-representation. The evidence (section 4.3.7) shows that discrimination affects atypical gender entrants to occupations as well as ethnic minority individuals – though in different ways. A macho workplace culture, and a belief in the gendered nature of work, can lead to gender discrimination (DIUS 2008). Some employers require

gender atypical entrants to outperform traditional recruits before they will be accepted (TUC/YCWA 2010). reference is where? Ethnic discrimination may be covert, with individuals excluded from shortlists on the basis of their surname (Butler 2009) and may reflect a desire among employers to work with people who are of a similar background and culture to themselves (unionlearn 2011).

The analysis of data from the Apprenticeship Pay Survey (APS) (section 3.2) provides detailed information on rates of pay, including overtime pay, as well as the provision of off-the-job training. Analyses reveal telling differences between the different groups. Gender is a significant influence on pay: when controlling for all other factors, female apprentices earn on average £0.24 less per hour than male apprentices. However, ethnicity is not a significant influence on the pay of apprentices, when controlling for all other factors (section 3.2.1).

Further analysis of the APS data demonstrates that male apprentices are more likely to be paid for overtime than females, while white apprentices are more likely than ethnic minority apprentices to do paid, as well as unpaid, overtime. Statistical tests show that the likelihood of paid overtime is significantly influenced by gender, but not ethnicity, when other factors are taken into account (section 3.2.4). Furthermore, both women and non-white apprentices are less likely than males and white apprentices to take part in off-the-job training (section 3.2.2).

It is possible to conclude, therefore, that gender is the biggest influence on the pay and conditions of apprentices, and is a more prominent influence than ethnicity. It is likely, however, that gender and ethnicity taken together compound disadvantage in respect of pay and conditions. The sector framework of Apprenticeships undertaken by female and non-white apprentices is highly influential since both are less represented in those sectors with a long tradition of Apprenticeship, and which consequently have better-developed conditions and progression opportunities.

What are the barriers? Who erects them?

There is a wealth of evidence and opinion about the barriers to Apprenticeships and factors that lead to occupational segregation, and it is apparent that there is no lack of awareness and knowledge about barriers among those involved in the Apprenticeship system. There is considerable consistency over time in stakeholders' views about what inhibits the take-up of Apprenticeships – which may imply a gap in action rather than knowledge. The barriers to Apprenticeship, drawn from the existing evidence (see Chapter 4 of the full research report) and the primary research for this project (Chapters 5 and 6), are shown in Table 1 below. These are categorised as arising from either the:

■ **demand-side,** i.e. related to young people and their social circumstances, or

■ **supply-side,** i.e. arising from the workplace, employers' practices or the practice and activities of providers.

Demand-side barriers

A greater number of barriers have been identified on the demand side, and there is an argument that increasing demand among a wider range of young people will lead to greater inclusivity in the Apprenticeship programme as a whole.

An over-arching issue concerns the views of parents, carers and wider society regarding 'appropriate' careers for young men and young women. Linked to this is the wider question of whether Apprenticeships are seen as a route to a good career, an issue that can particularly affect ethnic minority communities. The interviewees (Chapters 5 and 6 of the full research report) express views that are consistent with previous evidence (Chapter 4), such that Apprenticeships are seen as a 'second best, second chance' route or simply as a route to trade and craft

Table 1: Categorisation of the barriers to greater inclusivity in Apprenticeships

Demand-side	*Supply-side*
Parental views of suitable occupations	Lack of positive role models and mentors
Perceptions about routes to a good job	Exclusive recruitment practices
Lack of knowledge of (the benefits of) Apprenticeships	Direct and indirect discrimination
Negative perceptions of Apprenticeships	Lack of focus on equality and diversity among providers
Lack of direct occupationally relevant experience	Lack of Apprenticeship vacancies
Lack of confidence	High levels of competition for apprenticeship vacancies
Stereotyped perceptions of occupations	Lack of flexible working conditions
Cultural barriers	Lack of suitable support
Earlier decisions for non-apprenticeship routes	Impacts of policy developments
Lack of, inaccurate or insufficient careers guidance	At local level, Apprenticeships can reflect only the make-up of the local population

Source: Williams *et al* (2013)

occupations and not the professions. Parents and other influencers of young people often simply do not understand the current Apprenticeship offer and its benefits. This limits uptake of the programme.

There is evidence that a lack of occupationally relevant experience perpetuates gender stereotypical take-up of Apprenticeships (section 4.3.3; section 6.2.7). This is compounded by a lack of confidence, which can inhibit young people from moving into occupations that are not gender-typical, particularly at a young age – there is some evidence that this lack of confidence may be overcome among those who are older (section 4.3.4; section 6.1.2). However, a viewpoint persists that employers have little responsibility to create the conditions where atypical applicants feel confident to secure and sustain work in non-traditional sectors; this must be challenged – and some good practice evidence exists. For example, to avoid disadvantaging young women on the basis of a lack of relevant occupational experience, employers in the construction sector have encouraged young women to speak about activities related to construction, such as DIY and home-decorating, that they have engaged in rather than considering only directly relevant experience, in order to help them to provide relevant experiences in recruitment (section 6.3.5). Practices such as this must be promoted to a wider group of employers.

Cultural barriers to Apprenticeships were also discussed by interviewees, with some able to provide a very detailed picture of how these interact (section 6.1.2). These cultural barriers are often more about the country of origin and the migration trend than race per se and, as a result, there is an interplay between these barriers and social class. For example, Indian families were encouraged to enter the UK to become doctors because their training system was similar; a consequence of this is that highly educated individuals were attracted to the UK. These individuals are now parents and because of their experience they promote the academic route as a route to the professions. With some cultural and ethnic minority groups there are long-held beliefs relating to appropriate gender roles that will have to be overcome before the Apprenticeship programme becomes more inclusive.

The most frequently cited barrier noted by the interview sample was associated with the provision of independent and impartial careers guidance. There have been long-standing concerns that young people receive insufficient or inaccurate careers guidance (section 4.3.11). The recent policy change

– highlighted in the policy review (Chapter 2), which led to the restructuring of careers guidance and gives schools autonomy over the nature of careers guidance supplied to the student body – was particularly referred to by interviewees as having a detrimental impact (Chapters 5 and 6), though it is too soon to know the precise impact of these changes on take-up of Apprenticeships and establishing causality in any case would be challenging.

The review of the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England (LSYPE) enabled a historic picture of careers guidance for Apprenticeships to be explored (section 3.3.2) and showed that parents were overwhelmingly the main influencers on young people's decisions. However, teachers were also a key source of advice. While young people reported that, overall, careers guidance had been 'adequate', they also noted that the emphasis was primarily on academic and educational routes, rather than Apprenticeships and work-based training.

Concerns about careers guidance have been heightened following the recent restructuring of its provision. Questions were raised about whether careers guidance provision in schools is impartial (section 5.1.1), whether Apprenticeships are mentioned and whether occupational stereotypes are tackled within the careers guidance provided (section 6.1.2). A key challenge is that most teachers have experience only of academic programmes and are not well-placed to provide advice on vocational options. Guidance staff should have a broader insight, though they may see their role as demand-led; if a young person does not request information about Apprenticeships then this option would not be covered in the careers guidance session (section 6.1.2). Interviewees who do not work in schools, such as training providers and college staff, report barriers to entering schools to provide careers guidance, which inhibits the provision of broader careers guidance (section 6.1.4). The National Apprenticeship Service is implementing a series of actions to publicise alternative (non-academic) routes to young people and to broaden the careers guidance and support young people can access (section 5.4). Evidence from the interview sample suggests that, while these actions are well conceived, their longer-term impact may be hard to discern.

Supply-side barriers

While the barriers identified on the demand-side must be a focus of attention, this should not be at the expense of action to address the supply-side of the equation. Barriers arising from the supply-side – that is, from employers, training providers and others involved in the delivery of Apprenticeships – are more limited in number but have significant impact.

Employer recruitment practices are a particular concern (see section 4.3.8, section 5.3.1 and section 6.3.5 in the full research report) especially in smaller companies where informal approaches to recruitment operate, such as word of mouth and the recommendations of existing workers. These approaches can serve to deliver 'more of the same', narrow the recruitment pool and exclude non-traditional entrants to sectors and occupations.

The high demand for Apprenticeship vacancies leads to competition that may be to the detriment of atypical applicants. Employers seeking the best candidates may prioritise certain GCSE subjects and grades, as well as particular prior experience, which can make it hard for atypical applicants to compete since they lack the range or depth of experience of more traditional applicants (section 6.3.5).

The use of role models and mentors is a popular way of encouraging young people to consider a broader, and less traditional, range of job options. However, the small numbers of people from under-represented groups in the workplace means that there are insufficient role models and mentors to encourage young people; leading to a 'Catch 22' (section 6.2.3).

Beyond attracting a more diverse pool of applicants through improved recruitment practices, support and working conditions and arrangements are further concerns – a point that has been highlighted by numerous commentators over time (section 4.4.2). However, the interview sample identified some employers exhibiting good practice through offering mentoring and tailored line management support to apprentices generally. This is viewed as particularly beneficial to those from under-represented groups, as well as young people more widely, in helping them to cope better in the workplace (section 6.3.1).

Policy developments can be a critical lever in encouraging the requisite action and focus. For example, a number of the providers interviewed discussed recent Ofsted assessments, which include an increased focus on monitoring equality and diversity and taking action to address equality and diversity within existing practice (section 6.2.1). Since Ofsted assessments apply to providers across the Apprenticeship system, all will be held to account on these issues, which may lead to an increased focus on the attraction, support and retention of a broader range of Apprenticeship candidates.

What works well in addressing diversity issues?

There is a broad consensus among the interview sample about the types of actions that are needed, but their ideas are far from new; rather they confirm the earlier evidence that is reported in section 4.4.1 of the full research report. That they emerge again here in the latest research suggests that good practice has yet to take root and become embedded. That said, increased activity in some areas may lead to improved results in later years. The key recommendations for each stage of a young person's journey towards an Apprenticeship are set out below:

Pre-Apprenticeship practice

▊ Commentators and researchers have consistently noted that there is a need for the provision of better careers guidance. Careers guidance should include reference to Apprenticeships as well as to mainstream academic education opportunities, should discuss pay and conditions as well as qualifications, and should challenge stereotypes of Apprenticeships and occupations (section 4.4.1). Interviewees believed that the new careers guidance policy may undermine any action in this regard. Moreover, discussions with staff who deliver careers guidance shows that some believe careers guidance must be demand-led, guided by the young person's questions and self-identified aspirations rather than challenging or attempting to elaborate on the various options available (section 6.1.2). This interpretation is unhelpful and unlikely to lead to any significant change in the equality and diversity trends in Apprenticeships. A comprehensive package of careers education is needed early on, before young people have developed entrenched stereotypes about jobs, on which careers guidance might build (section 6.1.2). It would be helpful if all staff, not simply guidance providers but teachers too, who offer advice to young people, however formally or informally, had adequate knowledge of vocational training options to ensure that their advice is as impartial as possible.

▊ Tasters and work experience opportunities are also helpful, giving real insight into different curriculum areas/subjects, work roles and workplaces and in effect provide an active form of careers guidance. There was concern among interviewees that the Wolf Review has served to undermine the provision of work experience as part of the school curriculum, which may be detrimental to widening demand for Apprenticeships (section 6.1.3).

▊ Pre-Apprenticeship support is needed to help applicants from under-represented groups to compete successfully for Apprenticeships. At the time this report was written, the National Apprenticeship Service was supporting action on this by channelling funding through the Association of Education and Learning Providers for pilots to provide additional support to unsuccessful applicants (section 5.4). Some providers and some employers also offer pre-Apprenticeship support, which may provide a useful model to others (section 6.2.1, section 6.3.1 and section 6.3.5).

▊ Finally, positive role models are important, despite the 'Catch 22' situation (see earlier) that may inhibit their provision. Role models can be drawn from existing apprentices or from workers within organisations. Individuals selected to act as role models must be appropriate, be recognisable, offer a positive example and take an inclusive stance. However, those introducing role models, for example at employer events, must also be diversity-aware to ensure that, through their language and actions, they do not reinforce stereotyped perceptions of non-traditional individuals in occupations (Box 16, Chapter 7).

Practices that are effective in supporting non-traditional apprentices

■ Working with employers, where necessary, to address recruitment practices in order to restrict direct and indirect discrimination is important (see section 4.4.2 of the full research report). This can help businesses understand the unintended consequences of some recruitment practices. Providers are well positioned in this regard since many assist employers with the sourcing and recruitment of apprentices (section 6.3.5). However, providers do not always take action: some simply attribute the problem to employer practices without seeking to address them, while employers simplistically summarise the problem as a lack of demand from non-traditional apprentices for their vacancies (section 6.3.2).

■ Ensuring that appropriate working conditions are available is important (section 4.4.2). It is crucial, and forms part of equality duties, that employers ensure that facilities and requirements such as dress codes are adjusted to accommodate non-traditional apprentices. This can include cultural or religious requirements or separate facilities by gender.

■ In-work support is valued by non-traditional apprentices (section 4.4.2). This includes the provision of mentors in the work place – which may be a union learning rep, a sympathetic manager or a colleague – since this can help overcome feelings of isolation. The interviewees identified an additional role for mentoring that related to the building of resilience in non-traditional apprentices in order that they better cope with workplace banter and similar experiences (section 6.3.1). A further consideration in respect of in-work support should also include financial support in order to break down barriers for some groups' access to Apprenticeships. For example, young parents who study within the further education sector are entitled to financial support to help with childcare whereas apprentices do not benefit from this support. To increase uptake of Apprenticeship among young parents, consideration will be needed on this issue since apprentices, because they are in training, attract a wage rate lower than the standard minimum wage, which is likely to be insufficient to cover the costs of full-time childcare in addition to basic travel and subsistence costs.

Why has there been little change in the number of women and BME apprentices?

There is no lack of willingness or ability to both diagnose the problem and prescribe remedies among our interviewees or in the wider evidence. There is, as previously noted, considerable consistency about both over time. Therefore the question has to be why there is so little evidence of change in respect of under-representation in Apprenticeships. The following section explores some ideas about the implications and recommendations that arise from this research. It also considers how progress might be achieved.

Messaging: emphasise high-quality careers and a real alternative to university

Policy-makers and the recent Richard Review highlight quality as a critical concern; there are moves to deliver Apprenticeships starting from Level 3 and to extend Higher Apprenticeship provision at Level 4 and above. This sits well in the context of the need to raise the parity of esteem of vocational qualifications and of work-based training routes in order to attract more ethnic minority learners and gender atypical entrants.

The evidence suggests that talented young people are considering Apprenticeships as a real alternative to university studies; they also feel that Apprenticeships 'give them an edge' over graduates since they gain extensive work experience and develop and can demonstrate employability attributes. The avoidance of debts associated with university fee loans is in part driving this re-consideration of Apprenticeships.

▶ **Recommendation 1:** For the National Apprenticeship Service, the National Careers Service and employers *Communications work should continue, since raising awareness of Apprenticeships generally is seen as crucial in increasing their reach. Communications should continue to emphasise the full range of frameworks, and the career pathways, available. The 'earn as you learn' message is a useful one to attract young people to consider alternatives to academic education, and the avoidance of debt should be a key message while government is providing funding of Apprenticeship training costs for young people.*

Messaging: improve the focus and quality of careers guidance

The evidence indicates that current messaging and communications about Apprenticeships are well configured, but need to reach further and deeper into schools in order to capture the imagination of young people, parents and other influencers.

The raising of the participation age (RPA) was seen by some stakeholders as increasing interest in Apprenticeships among young people, once they fully understood the implications of the policy. It was argued that when young people understand that they would meet their duties under RPA by taking up an Apprenticeship, rather than a job without training (JWT), many would be attracted to the route. It is too soon to know the real influence of RPA, but it should provide a lever (if all else is equal) to increase uptake of Apprenticeships. There are, however, concerns that young people may not receive full and impartial information about RPA or impartial careers guidance more generally. It can be all too easy for young people to make a mechanical transition from school to sixth form without fully considering the route that may be best for them. Understanding more about the focus and quality of careers guidance is critical if progress is to be leveraged through it.

◉ Recommendation 2: For the National
Careers Service, Ofsted and schools
*Careers education should start early, it
should tackle stereotypes and, in particular,
it should aim to raise aspirations among
girls and some particular ethnic minority
groups. Independent careers advice should
highlight the benefits of 'earning and learning'
and high-quality Apprenticeships as a real
alternative to university. Schools should be
monitored and assessed on all successful
outcomes post-16, with Apprenticeships
given parity of esteem with higher education
outcomes. This links to recommendations
made by the Women's Business Council
(2013) and work done by the NUT on 'Breaking
the Mould',[3] which may provide added
impetus to assist action being taken.*

Ensure equality and diversity effects are considered

It is telling that equality and diversity did not
receive any great attention in either the Richard
Review or the Holt Review of the programme.
Questions around impact on equality and diversity
have been included in the consultation following
the Richard Review, though these are of limited
scope. If progress is to be achieved, then equality
and diversity should be key considerations in all
dimensions of the Apprenticeship programme.

◉ Recommendation 3: For the
Department for Business, Innovation
and Skills, the Apprenticeship Unit,
the National Apprenticeship Service
and the Skills Funding Agency
*It may be valuable that an equality and
diversity champions' forum is convened to
act as a critical friend to Apprenticeship and
related policy developments to ensure that
equality and diversity are truly embedded
in the programme. This might draw on the
enthusiasm already demonstrated as part of
the expert panel convened for this research as
well as existing expertise such as the Ethnic
Minority Employment Stakeholder Group, which
supports the Department for Work and Pension.*

Find the right funding mechanism

There is a risk that actions to address under-
representation have failed because they have been
funded as short-term and stand-alone initiatives
without legacy designed in. The Diversity in
Apprenticeship pilots, for example, demonstrated
that providers will respond if monies are available
and, while legacy was expected, arguably the pilots
were not sufficiently monitored on this. Similarly
the funding provided through the Association
of Education and Learning Providers to pilot
additional support to unsuccessful Apprenticeship
applicants must be capitalised upon. However,
to achieve a fuller legacy in future initiatives, it
may be necessary to take a different approach
through funding the outcomes that are desired.

There is an argument that to achieve a change it is
necessary to drive forward a particular set of behaviours
and that funding mechanisms can be an effective
means to achieve this. The Skills Funding Agency has
an opportunity to influence the behaviour of providers
through its funding mechanisms. It is already the case
that Apprenticeship funding is weighted differently
for different frameworks (to reflect differential costs
of delivery) and some (limited) account of socio-
economic factors is taken in post-16 funding.

◉ Recommendation 4: For the National
Apprenticeship Service, the Apprenticeships
Unit, the Skills Funding Agency and
the Education Funding Agency
*Providing additional monies for the recruitment
and, crucially, retention of non-traditional
candidates using payment-by-results may be
a driver of change. Making funding available
may be sufficient to promote and ensure the
embedding of good practice activities across
the post-16 sector. Some of the Employer
Ownership Pilots have focused on increasing
diversity in Apprenticeships and could
provide a model to build on, if successful.*

Implementation of effective practice needs local tailoring

Many interviewees, and the existing evidence base, highlight that certain activities are effective. Common recommendations about 'what works' include:

- role models
- ambassadors
- tasters, and
- collaboration between schools and providers and employers to deliver activities and information in schools.

There appears to have been no lack of initiatives, locally and nationally, utilising these approaches. However, there may be a need to consider factors in the local environment and the local youth population and to tailor approaches accordingly if these initiatives are to be successful. There are indications that role models must be recognisable to those on whom they are meant to impact, and not so very different that it drums into the target audience that a route or career is not for them. 'Like me' might mean a role model who shares the same academic ability, ethnicity or gender and occupation combination as the target audience. The burden on role models and ambassadors also requires consideration, as does whether stereotypes are reinforced by well-meaning but ill-placed comments when they are introduced at events.

◗ **Recommendation 5:** For employers, schools, the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency
Employers should allow apprentices and employees to visit local schools to encourage participation. This can build on work being done by 'Inspiring the Future'[4] and Speakers4Schools.[5] The Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency should ensure that information gets to the right person in each school to ensure that role models, employers and providers are enabled to access schools including academies and free schools. This correlates with the Women's Business Council (2013) report recommendation to encourage roles models and a recommendation from the National Careers Council (2013) that employers should encourage their employees to volunteer to go into schools and colleges.

Low-cost and low-risk activities have traction

In a time when resources are tight, those involved in implementation require solutions that are not resource intensive but that are known to be effective. The return on the investment in activities to address equality and diversity in Apprenticeships may not be demonstrated in a time-frame that encourages a high level of resource to be devoted to this issue.

There are examples of 'have a go' and taster events among the Diversity in Apprenticeship pilots that could be replicated through existing activities. For example, careers fairs and events were commonly mentioned in interviews with providers and are noted in the literature; these could, with little effort, be spun to have equality and diversity themes. Such approaches represent a low-cost and low-risk approach for those taking them forward.

◗ **Recommendation 6:** For the National Apprenticeship Service, the Skills Funding Agency, provider representative bodies and the Education and Training Foundation
Build on existing activities to promote equality and diversity and disseminate effective practice through the provider sector. Government agencies and their partners should use the annual Skills Show as a further forum to promote Apprenticeships, as is achieved through Apprenticeship Week – with a clear focus in both on diversity in Apprenticeships and high-quality achievements. This will raise awareness and keep Apprenticeships on the agenda throughout the year and provide a focus for equality and diversity activities. Similarly publicity should be given to other initiatives that are looking at promotion of equality and diversity or under-representation in Apprenticeships such as in the Employer Ownership Pilots.

Support the spread of good practice

While there is limited (and not necessarily growing) evidence of effective practice, ideas of 'what works' are well established. What may be needed is more support, encouragement and expectation that providers, schools and others embed these practices in what they do. A number of different partner organisations will need to be on board to take forward this work.

The Education and Training Foundation will be ideally placed as a key partner to support the dissemination of good practice activities. It manages the Excellence Gateway and this could be an avenue for dissemination.

Ofsted has potential to drive up quality in the careers guidance offered in schools and post-16 learning. It is also seen as highly engaged with equality and diversity, which some providers identified as supporting the embedding of good practice. Academies and free schools are subject to Ofsted inspections, which should ensure some consistency in practices despite differing management arrangements.

Provider networks can be influential; practice can be disseminated through them. Networks can also share resources to deliver or adapt activities to have equality and diversity dimensions. Employer networks or supply chains can also be influential and provide mentoring between businesses or opportunities for small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to recruit from large employer assessment centres.

▶ **Recommendation 7:** For the National Apprenticeship Service, the Education and Training Foundation, provider networks and Ofsted
The National Apprenticeship Service should approach employers with national contracts (grant employers) as a way of encouraging the promotion of good practice through supply chains. Make use of the Excellence Gateway to disseminate good practice to post-16 providers and training organisations. Examples of good practice could be drawn from the existing literature including, for example, the Diversity in Apprenticeship Pilots evaluation report. Providers may benefit from toolkits to help them adapt practices – to be low cost and low risk – within their contexts. When the Ofsted thematic review of careers provision (expected Autumn 2013) reports, the relevant parties to look at implementing their recommendations. This correlates with recommendation made in the Women's Business Council (2013) report that the government should report on how it plans to implement the findings of Ofsted's report on careers advice and information. Also the Education Select Committee (2013) report on schools careers guidance recommendation that local authorities and government promote best practice.

Become the preferred source of information

The Apprenticeship vacancy website received some criticism in this research, though overall it was viewed as a valuable resource. A number of interviewees expressed concern at the complexity of information about Apprenticeships and wanted one channel of information that would draw all resources together. It would assist the National Apprenticeship Service to get the correct information about Apprenticeships in the hands of influencers if it were able to become the preferred source of information. However, it is likely to be highly resource intensive to coordinate and connect the plethora of sources on Apprenticeships. It may also be used as a device to assure the quality and terms and conditions of Apprenticeship vacancies to ensure young people are exposed to high-quality training opportunities.

▶ **Recommendation 8:** For the National Apprenticeship Service and the National Careers Service
Increase online presence of the National Apprenticeship Service website and Apprenticeship vacancies and work together to create a comprehensive up-to-date source of information for young people, careers advisers, parents and schools. Monitor the quality of vacancies in respect of pay, hours and off-the-job training. This links to a recommendation made by the National Careers Council (2013) that it should extend online services and the Women's Business Council (2013) report, which suggests that 'parent packs' would enable parents to have the resources to support their children with post-16 transitions.

Taking action to change employer recruitment dynamics

Providers tend to build up a relationship of trust with the employers they engage with. There are benefits to this since repeat business can be generated. It is also apparent that providers frequently offer assistance to employers seeking to fill vacancies by providing a shortlist of candidates for employers to select from. Putting forward a shortlist containing diverse candidates without headlining the practice can be effective in helping to ensure non-traditional applicants are included in recruitment exercises. While not all employers will change the decisions they make, the emphasis on selecting the best talent in recruitment decisions may mean that more opportunities open up for under-represented groups.

◗ **Recommendation 9:** For the National Apprenticeship Service, providers and provider bodies
Encourage National Apprenticeship Service teams working with employers to focus more effort on engaging with ethnic minority employers to better understand their needs. Providers who gain 'repeat business' with employers should work to influence employer recruitment to increase equality and diversity in Apprenticeships. Explore the feasibility of providers acting as equality and diversity monitors within interview panels for Apprenticeships. The National Apprenticeship Service to look at the feasibility of anonymising applications made via the Apprenticeship vacancy service to discourage covert discrimination against ethnic minority applicants.

Work with employers to celebrate Apprenticeships and diversity

Awards and competitions are viewed positively by some employers and have business benefits. In addition, young people can be motivated by awards. Ensuring that award panels maintain an eye on equality and diversity may help to ensure that the benefits of awards and competitions can be leveraged to address under-representation. For example, recent awards that have celebrated diverse apprentices include the Rising Star awards as part of Golden Shears 2013. The gold and silver prizes were won by female apprentices from Savile Row tailors and achieved national press coverage.[6]

The Guardian newspaper annually publishes the National Apprenticeship Service list of top 100 apprentice employers, achieving national coverage for regional awards including SMEs alongside national employer Apprenticeship schemes. At the time of reporting, the 2012 list was available.[7]

Employers respond to a different type of language than that used in education and training and an appeal should be made to the business case for diversity. Employers should be able to pick from the widest talent pools – including women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Global businesses need staff that are comfortable working with people of different ethnic backgrounds.

◗ **Recommendation 10:** For the National Apprenticeship Service
Communicate with employers using language that they recognise and appeal to the business case for diversity in Apprenticeships. Communicate the message that Apprenticeships are an attractive and credible option. This links with the government Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills report (2013) advocating an employer-centred approach to Apprenticeships.

Use public procurement to drive up engagement with Apprenticeships and equality and diversity

Public procurement provides an opportunity to expand vacancies for non-traditional entrants. Pubic contracts can require suppliers to offer a balanced intake of apprentices since they are subject to duties in respect of equality and diversity. Since male-dominated sectors such as construction dominate public procurement contracts, the opportunities for atypical entrants by gender and race are clear. Such contracts can also assist in the expansion of training opportunities more generally since they could be used to require that a proportion of the workforce is recruited as apprentices to learn alongside skilled workers.

◉ Recommendation 11: For the government, BIS, Apprenticeship Unit and local authorities
Make use of public procurement and statutory duties under public contracts as a policy lever to ensure Apprenticeships are delivered and take account of equality and diversity. As part of this the timing of vacancies might also be managed, linked to key points in the academic year. The value of this will also be to increase vacancies, and provide more supported transitions to young people who do not wish to progress through education, and by this means help to reduce the numbers of those not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Build up young people's resilience but offer support in the workplace

It is apparent that non-traditional apprentices need to be resilient to cope in workplaces that are strongly gendered or dominated by a particular ethnicity. This however, should not be assumed to relate to confidence deficits in individual apprentices; the onus should be on employers and providers providing appropriate support to apprentices within the workplace.

Support should be available to all apprentices and especially those who are young and lack experience. It might be leveraged through sympathetic line managers and co-workers, as well as ULRs and other union representatives where they are present in the workplace.

◉ Recommendation 12: For Schools, employers, providers, ULRs, the National Apprenticeship Service and the National Careers Service
Work by schools and in post-16 education to help increase young people's confidence and resilience to cope with differences would be valuable. Also the National Apprenticeship Service to work with employers and providers to provide more support to ensure they have the resources needed to support apprentices. This links with recommendations made by the National Careers Council (2013) that the National Careers Service should work to explore the importance of 'character' and 'resilience'.

Build a recruitment process, and make it more timely

In the research interviews, schools suggested that it would assist greatly if there could be greater alignment between the demands of the academic year and when vacancies are advertised. They highlighted how applications for full-time study post-16 or post-18 are made in the winter term and places are confirmed in early January. This means that, by the time students would be able to apply and be available for Apprenticeship vacancies, most have a place lined up at college or university. In addition, the application has to be made at a time when they are involved in revision and examinations. It would undoubtedly be challenging to achieve this, but it can be seen as a barrier to accessing the Apprenticeship programme. Some large employers have used the examination results timetable to guide their recruitment patterns, but have started to move away from this as group training agencies (GTAs) have been disbanded and more, older apprentices (who already know their examination results) have been recruited.

A further, associated issue is the support that students receive to make a transition within education rather than to the labour market and training. Schools and colleges know how to support study applications and, consequently, young people are well supported in making these transitions. There is less clarity about how to support transitions to Apprenticeships and some young people are seeking to find their way with little support. Again, providing transition support is challenging for national agencies, though it might be possible within school or provider models if further help/training can be given to key staff so that they feel more informed about the process.

◗ Recommendation 13: For BIS, the Apprenticeship Unit, provider networks and provider representative bodies
The National Apprenticeship Service should work with provider networks and providers with collaborative links with schools and employers to support local models of the university 'milk rounds', in order that there is a focused point for highlighting Apprenticeships and gaining access to vacancies. This would be more applicable to sectors such as engineering, where recruitment can be planned far in advance, rather than customer service, which is more dependent on local labour markets. Use of public procurement and statutory duties under public contracts as a policy lever linking generally to ensure Apprenticeships are delivered and take account of equality and diversity considerations as well as timing of vacancies linked to key points in the academic year. This correlates with recommendations made in the Education Select Committee report on schools careers guidance (2013) suggesting that the National Apprenticeship Service expands to promote Apprenticeships in schools and the National Careers Service supports a brokerage role for schools.

Ensure applying is straightforward

A number of stakeholders interviewed for this research theorised that typically the traditionally male and craft skill Apprenticeships were better organised and offered better progression pathways than those in occupations that are female dominated, or that are new to the Apprenticeship programme. This made it harder for young women to access and progress through the programme. There were also statements that providers advertise Apprenticeships but note in the small print that the young person has to find their host employer by themselves. This is undoubtedly unhelpful and could lead to young people entering jobs without training, which from a policy perspective is undesirable.

◗ Recommendation 14: For the National Apprenticeship Service
It would beneficial to explore the quality of the Apprenticeship offer in a sample of gender-stereotyped sectors, comparing those with and without a long tradition of Apprenticeship. This would establish the nature of any action that is required. There may be a need to provide guidance for providers that any advertising of Apprenticeships targeting young people should encompass the full package and not simply the training element. This type of advertising would be more relevant to employers.

Overcoming gender stereotyping and ethnic under-representation in Apprenticeships

Taking into account the actions recommended above to make Apprenticeships more inclusive at a general level, some specific actions are required to address the needs of the two key groups. Based on the analysis presented in these conclusions and the report as a whole, these are summarised in the following sections.

Recommendations for activities to increase ethnic representation

The recommendations for activities to increase ethnic representation in Apprenticeships aim to redress the barriers to participation by encouraging individuals from ethnic minority groups to see Apprenticeships as a viable option and ensuring that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are enabled to secure an Apprenticeship job.

- Further detailed research is needed to examine the barriers to access. The statistical first releases available for Apprenticeship vacancy data show there are many more applicants from ethnic minority groups than ethnic minority apprentice starts. It will be necessary to examine whether this is about prior qualification level – which reflects Key Stage 4 performance – or something else. (This research could be commissioned by the National Apprenticeship Service.)

- Related to this point, data emerging from the Apprenticeship Application Support Fund pilots (the 'bootcamps'), which were commissioned through the AELP, may be insightful. Evaluation of these pilots with a focus on a detailed examination of barriers and the solutions that have proved effective would be valuable. (The National Apprenticeship Service or the funding agency should require this as part of its delivery contract with the Association of Education and Learning Providers.)

- Employer recruitment strategies should be examined to see whether there is evidence of (unwitting) discrimination, and employers should get involved to sell the business case for diversity to other employers. (This could build on previous DWP research, and could be led by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, via the Apprenticeships Unit, and would need to involve employers and employer representative bodies.)

- Apprenticeship providers should seek to present more diverse shortlists of apprentice candidates to employers and work more closely with employers on recruitment, for example by sitting on recruitment panels to ensure fair and equal recruitment practices are used. (This action should be taken by providers with support from the Skills Funding Agency Relationship Managers and be further encouraged by provider bodies and through provider networks.)

- It is crucial that work is undertaken to raise the esteem of Apprenticeships within ethnic minority communities in order that young people from these backgrounds are encouraged by their parents to consider the Apprenticeship route. Related to this, work in communities is also required to raise awareness of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as well as the route that Apprenticeships provide to these high-quality careers. (This will require a cross-government effort, involving the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education, and could be based on media campaigns as well as work through community intermediaries. The involvement of careers guidance providers in schools, colleges and training providers would support this activity.)

- To overcome the performance bar to access Apprenticeships, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds need to attain better Key Stage 4 qualifications. To do this requires ambitions to be raised as well as the delivery of support that enables young people to overcome difficulties encountered in the build up to Key Stage 4 examinations. It may also entail work and support starting in much earlier phases of learning. (The Department for Education should take a key role in ensuring schools raise ambitions for good careers; Ofsted can monitor the provision of careers guidance; Key Stage 4 destination measures should help to demonstrate to schools the outcomes of actions in this regard.)

- There is a consensus that role models are an effective source of inspiration and support to young people from diverse backgrounds. Employers and training providers should work to identify culturally congruent (where possible) role models within Apprenticeships who can act as ambassadors for the programme. (This action should be the responsibility of employers and Apprenticeship providers, including provider networks. Provider bodies could take a role in encouraging their members to take on this effective practice.)

- Where employers have a focus on the conversion of existing employees into Apprenticeships, equitable access should be given to people from ethnic minority backgrounds. (ULRs and training providers should take a lead on ensuring that this happens and should provide advice where individuals have concerns about converting their role to an Apprenticeship.)

- Emphasise the role of Apprenticeships as a route to professions as well as trades; and as an alternative means to progress to higher education without the debt implications. The research has shown that for some ethnic minority groups, particularly those from migrant backgrounds, the message about quality is particularly important. (The National Apprenticeship Service, the Apprenticeships Unit and the National Careers Service should take responsibility for this action.)

- Religious considerations relate to but are different from general messages about ethnic under-representation in Apprenticeships. Some religious groups require minor adaptations to working conditions to allow, for example, time and space for prayer. In addition, allowances should in most cases be made for religious restrictions in respect of clothing. (Providers may need to consult with employers and young people about the requirements generated by different religious beliefs. They may benefit from expert assistance and guidance in interpreting the restrictions placed by different faiths on work and training. Provider staff who share the same faith as employers or learners can be valuable in helping to interpret religious restrictions on work, overcoming stereotypes and devising effective solutions that enable young people to work and train. The National Apprenticeship Service and the Education and Training Foundation could work together to disseminate good practice examples.)

Recommendations for actions to increase representation of women

When drawing up actions to increase representation of women in Apprenticeships it is apparent that many of the necessary actions are well established. They are reiterated here with indications about which organisations could provide a lead on addressing and, more crucially, embedding them in practice.

- Better-quality, more in-depth and challenging careers guidance at an earlier age that, crucially, addresses occupational stereotypes is needed. In addition, clear information about how Key Stage 4 choices and later choices affect career prospects by narrowing options to change at a later stage should be highlighted. Similarly, young people require information about how career choices affect future pay and progression in the labour market. The pay associated with different Apprenticeship frameworks should also be included within careers guidance. (Schools, Ofsted, the National Careers Service and careers education professionals should take the lead on this action.)

- Much of the gender segregation seen in Apprenticeships is reflective of gender divisions in the labour market. Knowing about discrimination or division in an employment sector can deter people from considering that work, therefore more must be done to convince people that the door really is open. (Employers, sectoral bodies, unions, employer representative bodies and careers education professionals should engage with and share good practice.)

- Related to this is ensuring that the door is genuinely open and this requires action to address any gender discrimination or stereotyping seen within workplaces. (Sectoral bodies, unions and employer representative bodies should lead on this.)

- As with ethnic minority groups, role models can be a powerful influence on young women and are particularly important for young women who are considering gender-atypical career choices. Many young women who enter non-traditional Apprenticeships, interviewed as part of this research, made gender-atypical choices because they have family members in sectors where women are under-represented such as in engineering and have been excited by the work undertaken by their family members. Widening the influencers beyond the immediate family is therefore of critical importance if there is to be a genuine attempt to widen career horizons. (This should be the responsibility of employers and Apprenticeship providers, schools and careers professionals as well as families.)

- The evidence presented in this report shows that race compounds gender when it comes to under-representation in Apprenticeships. Females from ethnic minority backgrounds need more support to overcome barriers to Apprenticeship entry and to achieving success once engaged in Apprenticeship training. Therefore any actions that are taken to improve the inclusivity of Apprenticeships should consider the equality and diversity effects in relation to ethnic diversity with gender equality in combination. (The Apprenticeship Unit, the National Apprenticeship Service and the funding agency should share actions on this point.)

- Consideration of the needs of young parents is also required. The lack of funding to support the costs of childcare while undertaking an Apprenticeship may mean that young parents are deterred from the programme, since the Apprenticeship National Minimum Wage is unlikely to cover these costs in addition to general costs of living. In addition, young parents may require greater flexibility in terms of hours worked. The current framework requirements may not offer the flexibility needed by young parents, even if employers are themselves prepared to be flexible on working hours. (The Apprenticeship Unit, the National Apprenticeship Service and the funding agency should explore whether childcare costs and lack of flexibility in terms of hours acts to deter young parents from the programme.)

Notes

1. For example, DCSF, DIUS (2008). *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking talent, building skills for all;* the EOC inquiry into gender equality and modern Apprenticeships (see page XX).

2. For example, see commentary about the withdrawal of Train to Gain funding and the rising trend of 'conversion' Apprenticeships.

3. www.teachers.org.uk/node/15762

4. www.inspiringthefuture.org

5. www.speakers4schools.org

6. www.gq-magazine.co.uk/style/articles/2013-03/19/golden-shears-bespoke-tailoring-awards-2013 and http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/news-features/tmg9940189/girls-rule-the-2013-golden-shears-awards

7. http://careers.theguardian.com/interactive/top-100-apprenticeships-employers

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