

Local Authority Apprenticeship Programmes



The survey was conducted by Vickie Hacking, APSE Principal Advisor

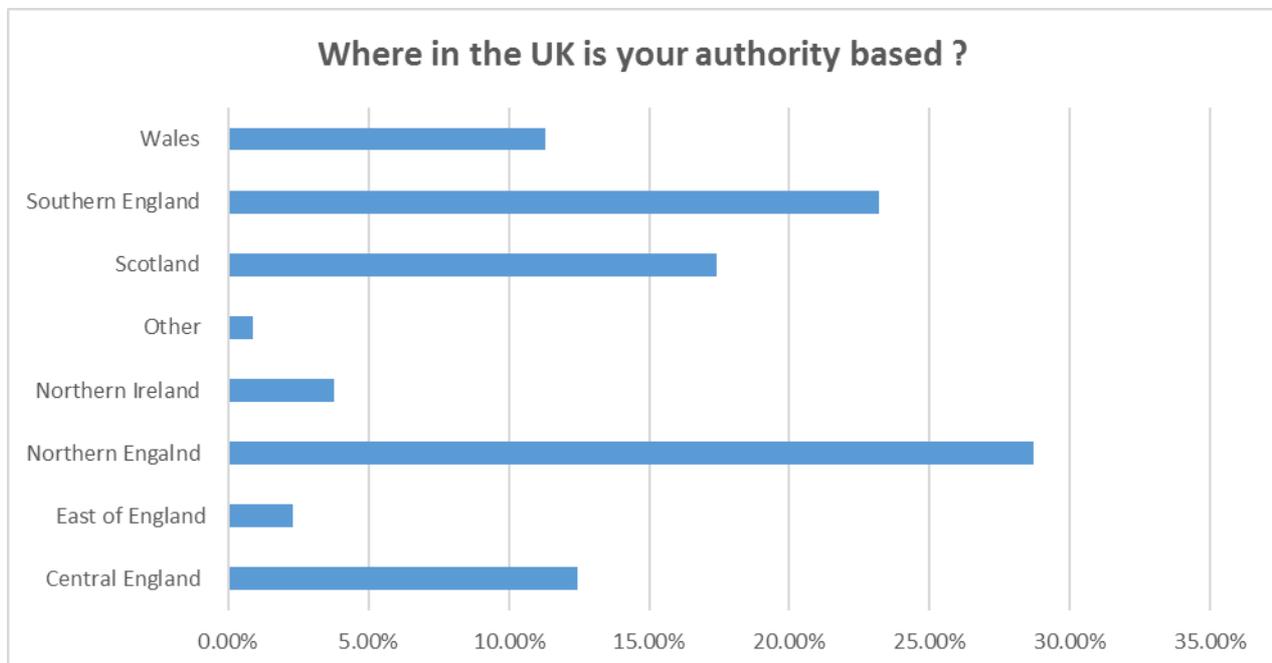
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Local Authority Apprenticeship Programmes

APSE conducted an online survey during May and June 2018. The survey was undertaken to gain an overview of Local Authority Apprenticeship Programmes. There was a total of 345 responses received from local authorities throughout the UK. This report provides a summary of the survey responses.



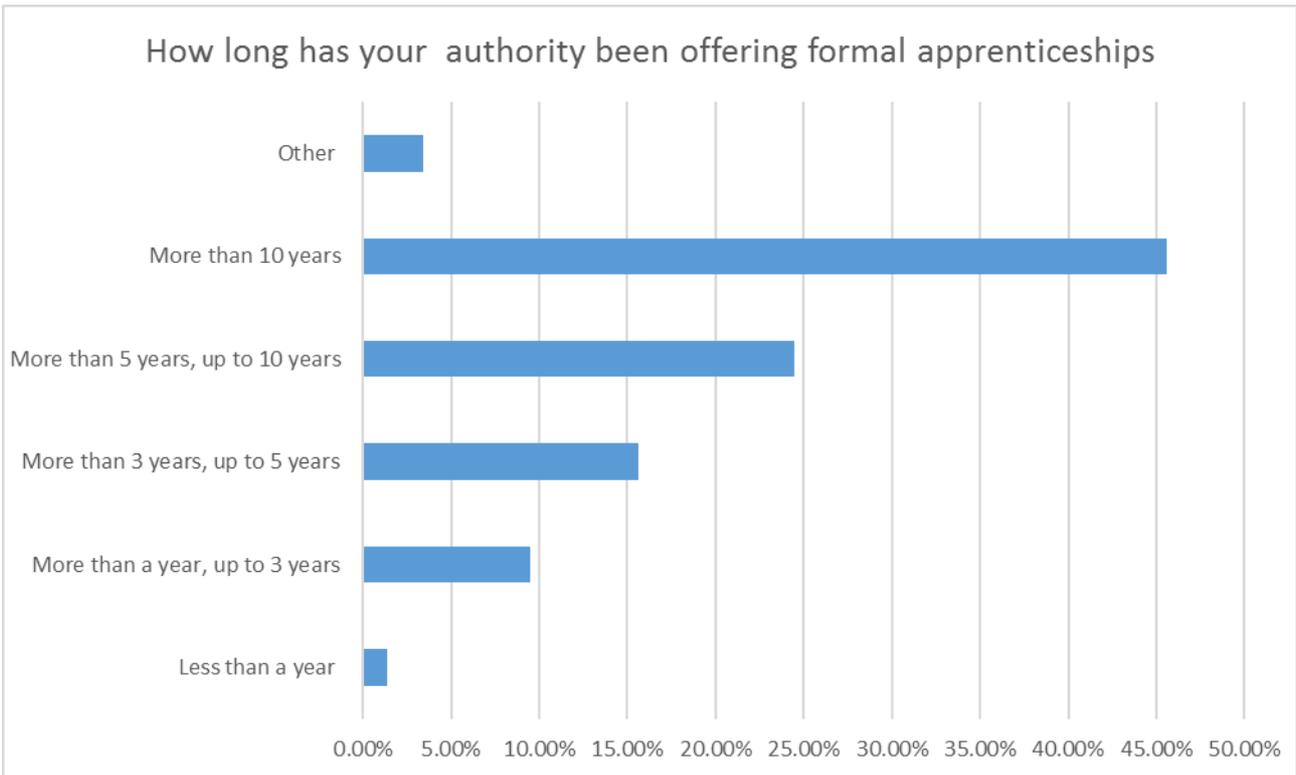
Results from the survey

a) Apprentice Programmes

This section of the survey focused on the arrangements in place for Apprenticeship Programmes.

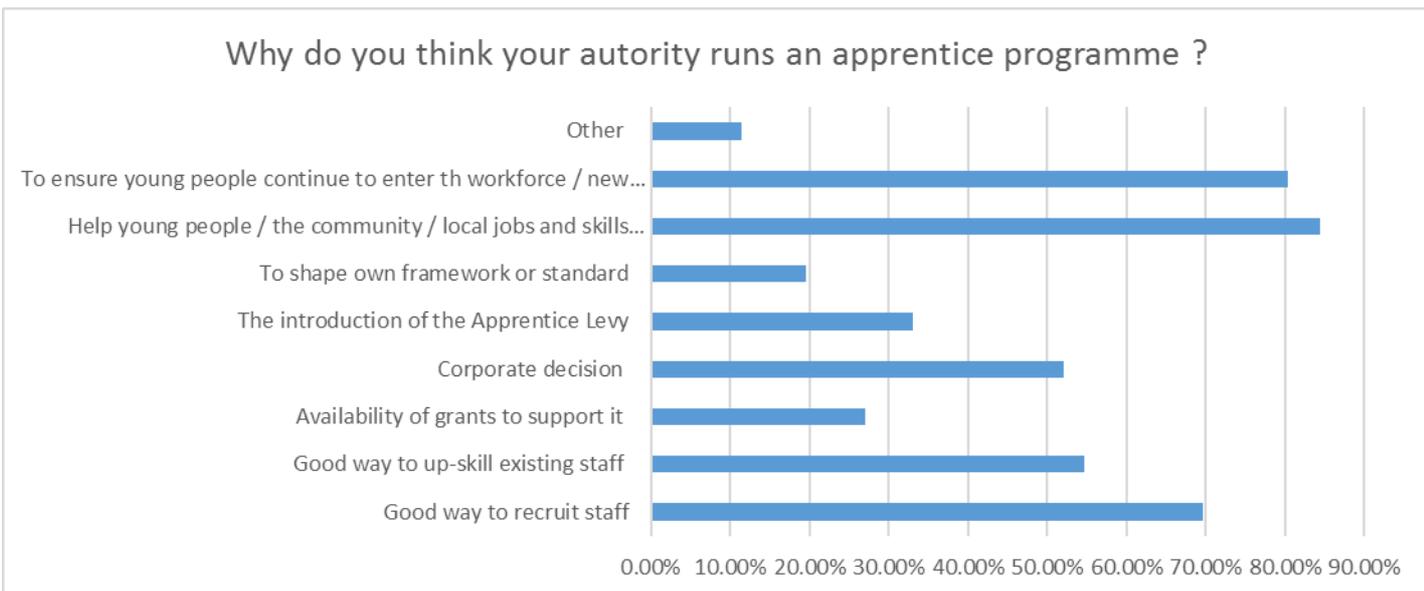
The vast majority of programmes are administered corporately with 58.22% of respondents reporting this approach. It was reported that 19.86% were administered on a service by service approach, a further 6.85% are administered at directorate level. A total of 15.07% advised that they had alternative arrangements in place. The majority of respondents reporting alternative arrangements specified that their programme was administered by the Human Resources Service; a specific apprenticeship team; economic development or a neighbouring council.

In a bid to gain an understanding of how established apprentice programmes are in local authorities, the survey asked how long formal apprenticeships had been offered by the council.



Just under half of all respondents (45.58%) reported that their scheme had been in place for more than 10 years. There were 24.49% with a programme that had been in place for 5 to 10 years, 15.65% have had a scheme in place for 3 to 5 years, with 9.52% having a formal scheme in place for 1 to 3 years and 1.36% had established their programme in the last year. From the other responses received, it was confirmed by one authority that they were in the process of setting up a programme and only one respondent advised that they did not have any formal arrangements in place.

Local Authorities were asked for the reasons they believed that the authority ran an apprenticeship programme.



From the additional comments supplied in relation to this question, respondents reported that they believed that the authority had an apprenticeship programme in place for the following reasons: -

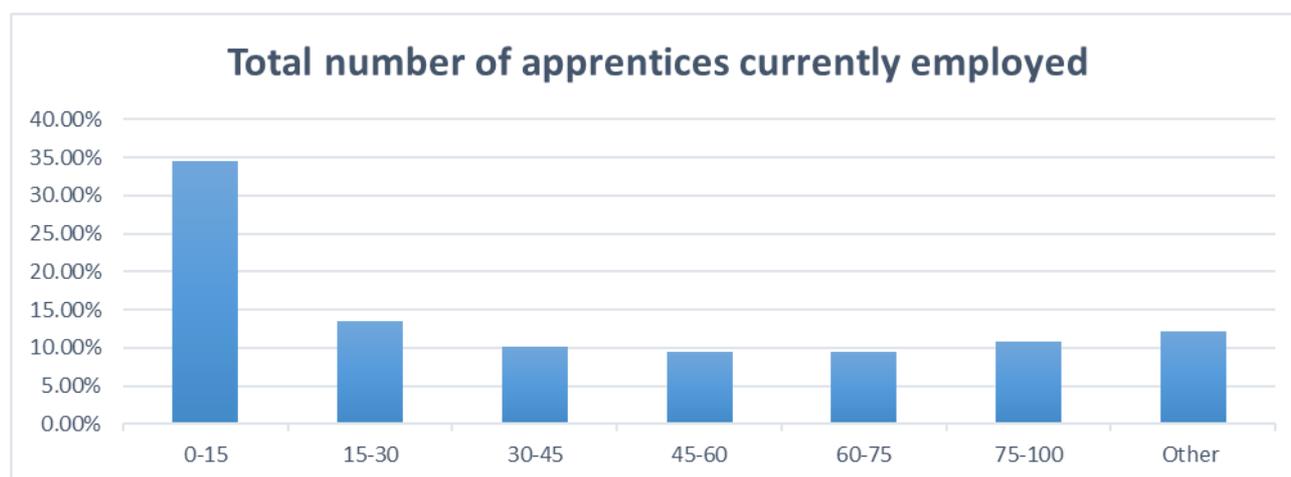
- To meet the workforce development and skills gap of the local authority and private sector
- The programme links to wider economic and skills strategy
- Succession planning
- The programme supports wider corporate objectives
- The programme is an effective mechanism to recruit to hard to fill areas
- A cost-effective way to meet resourcing needs

To gain an understanding of how local authorities are recruiting their apprentices the survey asked for respondents to provide details of how they recruited apprentices. The vast majority, 67.42% advertised and recruited through the council website, there were 18.18% reporting that they worked with schools and colleges, a further 10.61% promoted their apprenticeship programme at career fayres and 3.79% used social media platforms. In the comments associated with this question a large portion of the respondents advised that they used a mixture of all of the options to recruit apprentices to the programme at their local authority. In addition, some local authorities also reported that they used local organisations to promote the vacancies.

b) Number of Apprentices

This section focused on the number of apprentices employed, the percentage completion rate for apprentices, the opportunities provided to progress into permanent roles within the organisation and the perception of how the apprenticeship programme will develop in the future.

In response to the question regarding the number of apprentices currently employed by an authority, the number of reported apprentices ranged from 0-15 up to 300. The graph below outlines the range of apprentices reported by respondents: -



To gain an understanding of the service areas that apprentices were employed in, the survey asked for respondents to provide a breakdown of the number of apprentices by service area. The table below provides an outline of the breakdown reported.

Service Area	Number of apprentices				
	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25
Construction, planning and the built environment	25.30%	54.22%	18.07%	9.64%	15.66%
Business, administration	22.22%	35.19%	25.00%	11.11%	19.44%

and law					
Catering	18.18%	81.82%	9.09%	0.00%	3.03%
Cleaning	23.81%	80.95%	9.52%	0.00%	4.76%
Building maintenance	19.61%	58.82%	5.88%	9.80%	13.73%
Environmental Services	25.42%	74.58%	13.56%	6.78%	0.00%
Horticulture and grounds maintenance	27.78%	71.11%	20.00%	2.22%	1.11%
Leisure	22.22%	75.56%	11.11%	2.22%	2.22%
Crematorium and Cemetery	13.64%	90.91%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Highways	20.59%	64.71%	19.12%	4.41%	1.47%

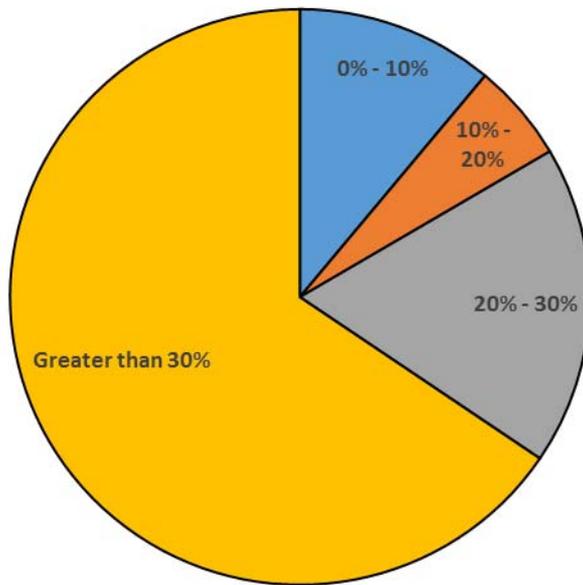
In addition, local authorities reported that apprentices were employed in the following services:-

- Early years – supporting and teaching
- ICT
- Finance
- Project management
- Leadership and management
- Health and social care
- Customer services
- Social services
- Vehicle maintenance / fleet maintenance
- Caretaking
- Digital e.g. websites
- Procurement
- Housing management
- Renewables
- Heavy goods
- Ecology

The majority of respondents, 72.97% advised that 80%-100% of their apprentices completed the full programme.

On the completion of the apprenticeship programme, a high proportion of the apprentices were offered a permanent role at the authority. The graph below outlines the range in the percentage offered a role: -

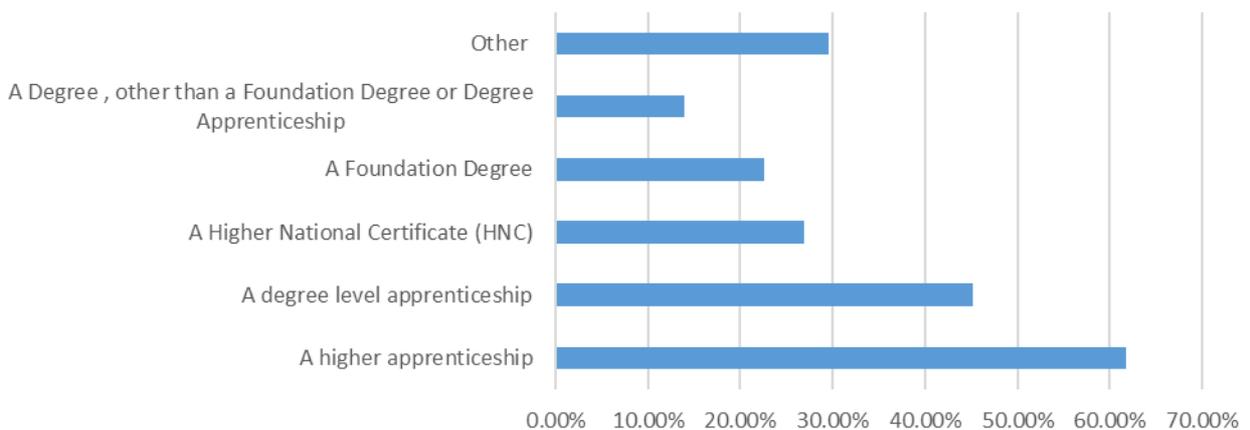
Percentage of apprentices offered a permanent role



Many of the respondents that provided an additional comment to this question reported that the authority aimed to keep all of their apprentices' subject to the successful completion of the programme.

The survey highlighted that authorities were using apprenticeships to upskill existing staff and to gain an overview of this the survey asked if higher level apprenticeships were offered. The graph below outlines the responses received.

Does your authority offer any of the following higher level apprentices



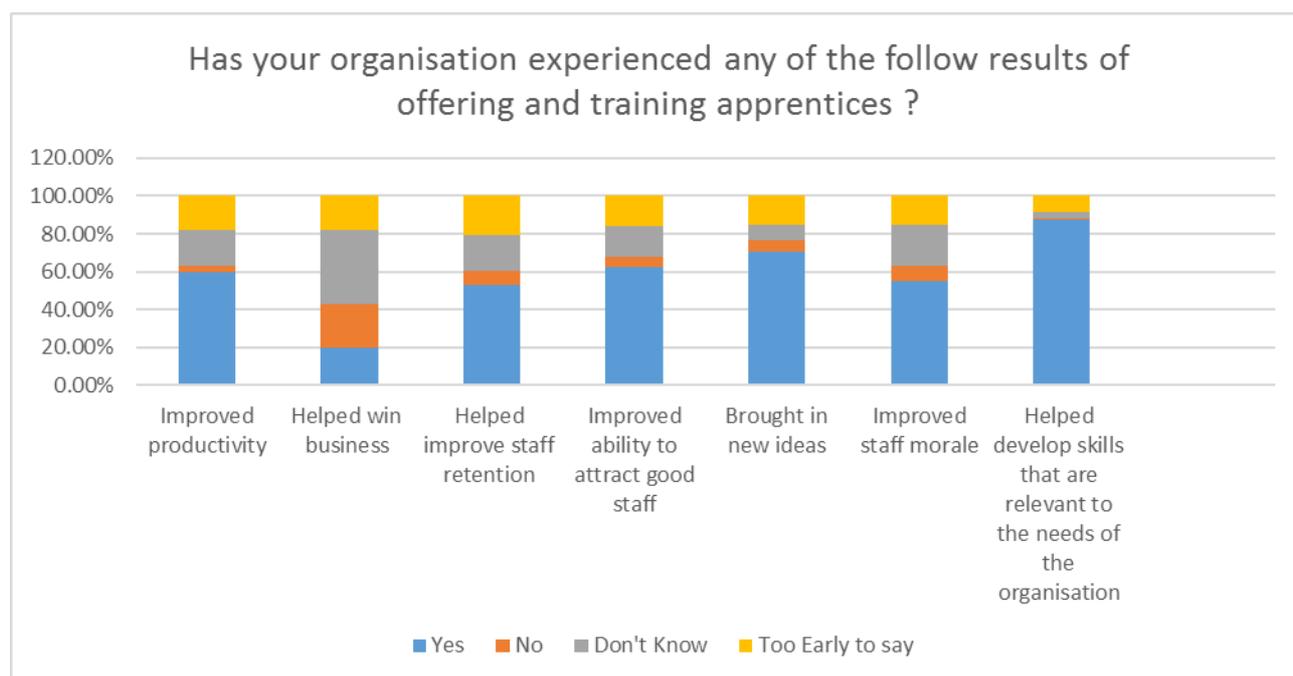
The comments from this question highlight that many councils are using higher level apprenticeships to upskill their workforce in areas of skills shortages such as housing and property management. In addition, it was reported that the higher-level apprenticeships are being used to develop skills in leadership and management as well as project management in the existing

workforce. For the authorities that did not currently offer this type of qualification, councils were reporting that they are considering using the Apprentice Levy to fund higher level courses.

C.) Benefits and pay for apprenticeships

This section sought to establish the perceived benefits of apprenticeship programmes to the authority, gain an understanding of the pay rates for apprentices and the perceived changes to the programmes in the future.

APSE was keen to establish the perceived benefits that the apprenticeship programme brought to the authority, the graph below outlines the responses received: -



It was also commented that the programme assists the authority by replacing retiring staff and allows the council to train professionals for roles that they would not otherwise be able to attract recruit fully qualified professionals.

The survey asked what pay and reward arrangements were in place for apprentices, and it was clear from the responses that there was a vast range of pay rates offered. The table below outlined the responses received

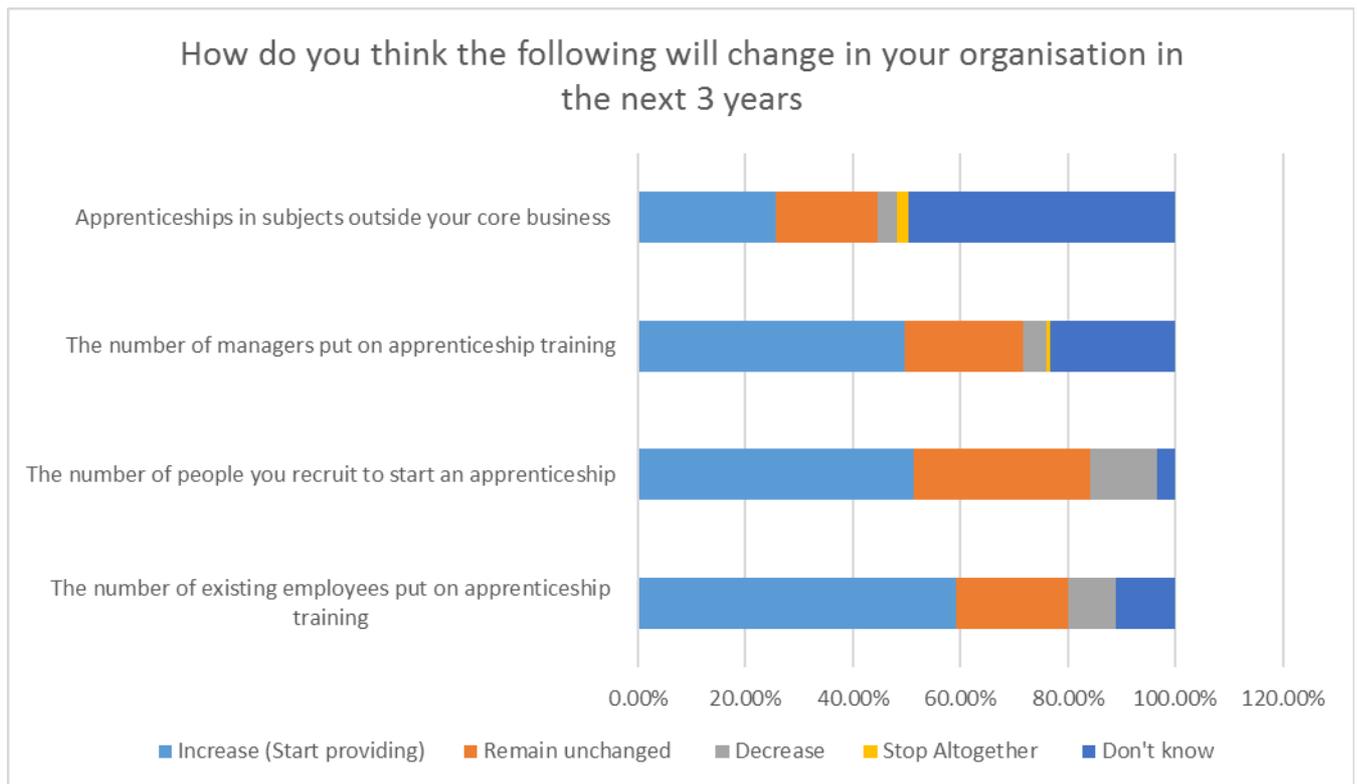
	Yes	No	Varies by department	Don't know
We pay the standard apprentice rate (currently £3.70 ph for under 19's and first-year over 19s)	43.90%	30.49%	20.73%	4.88%
We pay the minimum wage for all apprentices based on their age category (more than apprentice rate)	53.09%	25.93%	16.05%	4.94%
We pay the living wage to all apprentices				

regardless of age	47.62%	31.75%	12.70%	7.94%
Do you have an 'improver rate' i.e. a lower pay rate?	4.08%	77.55%	6.12%	12.24%
Other	83.37%	9.68%	0.00%	6.45%

There were a large number of comments submitted to this question and the responses are summarised below: -

- The national living wage at the over 25 rates is paid
- A percentage of the bottom scale for the job role
- The apprentice is paid at the lowest grade for the role
- An apprentice rate is paid for the first 12 months and then are paid at the pay grade for the role
- The authority has an agreed apprentice pay grade

The survey also asked what the perceived changes would be to their apprenticeship schemes over the next 3 years and the graph below details the responses.



APSE comment

Local authorities across the UK have well established apprenticeship programmes in place with over 45.58% of respondents to the survey reporting that their programmes have been in place for more than 10 years. There is a range of reasons cited for running programmes but it is clear from the responses that they are in place as part of a wider corporate strategy with the majority of respondents reporting that they ensure young people continue to enter the workforce and assist in developing skills and knowledge in the local area.

The skills and knowledge shortage across a range of sectors is widely publicised and it is evident from the responses received that the apprenticeship programmes are assisting in bridging the skills gap across a whole range of services from construction to horticulture. The majority of authorities are reporting over 80% of their apprentices completing the programme and being offered permanent roles within the council.

The role of local authority officers has evolved rapidly and it is clear from the survey that higher level apprenticeships are being used as a mechanism to upskill the existing workforce especially in areas such as leadership and management as well as project management. It is the view of respondents that this will become an increasing trend with 59.31% predicting an increase in the number of existing staff that will undertake an apprenticeship and 49.65% predicting that the number of managers undertaking an apprenticeship will increase.

APSE believe that the Apprentice Levy has assisted in raising the profile of apprenticeships and focuses financial resource on building the skills and knowledge of the workforce. However, APSE would like to see Government develop a national labour strategy, as part of the industrial strategy, to support respective industries such as construction, recognising that the availability of skilled workers will impact on delivery.

On a final point, APSE recognises that training apprentices requires commitment, resources and time for trainees to become a fully qualified and capable team member making a contribution to the local authority. Some local authorities invest significantly in this area and we want to highlight the training organisations and the individual apprentices who are leading the field within the UK.

The [APSE local authority apprentice and trainee of the year awards](#) are specific to front line service areas and support excellence in training standards within local authorities and their partner organisations throughout the UK, including members and non-members of APSE. The awards scheme is open to candidates from all stages of training and have been running successfully for 17 years. The awards are open to every authority and their partner organisations in the UK. For further information please visit our website - [APSE Apprentice Awards](#).

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