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# APPRENTICESHIP **DIVERSITY** CHAMPIONS — NETWORK —

**2021-22 Annual Report**

# Foreword

## Lia Nici, MP: ADCN Chair

It's hard to believe it's been a year since I was asked by the Secretary of State to step into the role of Chair of the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN).

It has been a very challenging year for us all, and I am very aware of the lengths that businesses have gone to, to respond to the pandemic. They have dealt with uncertainties, premises closures and reduced capacity, and have gone to extraordinary lengths to keep their employees and their customers safe. Alongside these unprecedented challenges, our ADCN members have retained and even strengthened their commitment to diversity and inclusion in their businesses and in particular their apprenticeships programmes.



They, like I, recognise that during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, people from vulnerable backgrounds, young people, people from ethnic minorities, and those who declare a learning difficulty or disability are particularly vulnerable. Throughout the last year I have been consistently impressed and inspired by the stories of resilience and success from our members, because at the heart of those stories is a commitment to building diversity in their apprenticeship workforces. For our members this commitment is more than a set of numbers, or an issue of legislative compliance. It is real and enduring. Our members recognise the genuine business benefits of both apprenticeships, and workforce diversity. They do it because it makes them more competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing and challenging environment.

I am delighted to bring forward this annual report, including case studies of excellent practice in diversity and inclusion. It contains real life examples of what businesses have done to achieve greater diversity and inclusion in apprenticeships. In sharing this, we hope to inspire businesses throughout the country to give our tried and tested methods a go and achieve a competitive edge. You can take confidence from the fact that someone else has made it work, whilst gaining the edge on those who are still lagging behind on the diversity and inclusion of their workforce.

Only through this diversity can we build back better than ever before.

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# ADCN Member Organisations

RNLI	Superdrug	Brighton & Hove City Council
Coca Cola	Persimmon Homes	Bristol City Council
European Partnership	<b>Resource Productions</b>	DiVA films
South West City Farm	Thames Valley Police	Rolls Royce
University of Leicester	<b>Transport for London</b>	Compass Group
Labcorp	Leadership Through Sport	UK & Ireland Ltd
Anchor Hanover	Lancashire NHS	Kier Group
London Fire Brigade	ITV	Hampshire Hospitals NHS
Royal Shakespeare Company	Channel 4	Foundation Trusts
Lancashire Constabulary	Buckinghamshire Fire	Health Education England
Brother UK Limited	& Rescue Service	KPMG
CGI	XPO Logistics	<b>Lloyds</b>
HM Prison & Probation Service	Washwood Heath Academy	<b>Banking Group</b>
G4S	Vets 4 Pets	NG Bailey
Frimley Health NHS	Christeyns	Worldskills
Foundation Trust	Colas Rail	Northumberland Tyne & Wear
The Royal Navy	Bombardier	NHS Foundation Trust
Sussex Partnership NHS	Shropshire Council	Staffordshire University
Foundation Trust	Nottingham City Homes	The Atomic
Engie	University of Birmingham	Weapons Establishment
Canal and Rivers Trust	<b>Connectr</b> (previously known	Uniper
Clarion Housing Group	as MyKindaFuture)	Corndel
Cheshire Constabulary	Walsall Council	The Co-op Group
HIT Training	<b>Siemens</b>	Lookers
Avon, and	Asda	DFDS
Somerset Constabulary	BAE Systems	Cell and Gene
Bauer Media	Balfour Beatty Group	Therapy Catapult
TXM Plant	Barclays	Birmingham Women's
Equal Engineers	BBC	& Children's NHS
National Trust		Foundation Trust

# About the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network

## Who We Are

The ADCN is an employer-led network of over 90 members. Our members are committed to take action to widen participation in apprenticeships, champion diversity, and support greater social mobility.

## Our Mission

We like practical action and results that are shareable. Every ADCN member makes a pledge to improve diversity in their apprentice workforce in a measurable way upon joining. It is up to the individual member what that pledge looks like, but at its heart it is a commitment to be a champion for improving diversity and social mobility in apprenticeships.

Our mission is to improve the uptake, and retention of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with a learning difficulty, or disability, and those from a poorer socio-economic background, into our apprenticeship programmes. For those in sectors where particular groups are poorly represented (such as women in ICT, construction, manufacturing and engineering) we have an additional focus on broadening representation.

By ensuring that our members' objectives are targeted and measurable, we demonstrate as a network that not only is change achievable, but it is also replicable through case studies and best practice for employers of any size.

In this report we will look at a range of actions from those that are simple to implement, through to longer-term planning.

## Why We Do It

Improving diversity and inclusion isn't just a 'right thing to do', it can bring real and tangible benefits;

- Every 1% increase in diversity rate of a workforce, can lead to a 9% rise in sales revenue.
- Businesses with a healthy balance of men and women are 15% more likely to outperform their competitors.
- Businesses with employees from a good mix of ethnic backgrounds are 35% more likely to outperform their competitors.

This is why just bringing a good balance of people in isn't enough; we need to retain and progress people from diverse backgrounds too.

Every employer has a duty under the Equality Act to not discriminate against (directly, or indirectly) people with protected characteristics. But beyond the legal requirements, it can be daunting to understand what diversity means to your organisation, and why you should get involved.

For small and medium-sized employers (SMEs) in particular, a diverse workforce can really have a positive impact. SMEs are much more likely to recruit young people, people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and people from ethnic minorities. By ensuring that your workforce reflects the local area, you are making yourself more appealing to customers. Ideas brought in by people's different backgrounds can help your business to reach more people and be more competitive.

In short, a diverse workforce makes good business sense!

## Manny's Story

Manny Badyal spent most of his life working in traditional Indian businesses but decided to look for something different. He joined Co-op Funeralcare five years ago and describes it as a second family with a real sense of warmth he'd not felt anywhere else.

Coming into the industry with no experience when he first joined the Co-op as a Funeral Service Operative, Manny completed a level 2 apprenticeship. Since then, he has progressed into a Funeral Director role, making a difference to families and communities, and is working towards his level 3 apprenticeship.

The Co-op are delighted with what Manny has brought to the business, "Manny is an inspiration, bringing to work his joyous personality, but it does not stop there, Manny champions the promotion of diversity across Co-op, and plays a big role in supporting his local community all while helping families say the best possible goodbye to their loved ones."

Manny feels the Co-op's apprenticeship programme is a fantastic opportunity to develop the skills needed to build a successful career in funeral care. "I've not just found a job that's more rewarding, I like to think I've found my calling in life here."



## About Joining

Membership of the network is free and requires members to set and measure progress against their own pledges. It is open to any organisations with a commitment to diversity and inclusion, **regardless of company size, sector, or maturity of your apprenticeship programme.**

The network meets around four times a year, including National Apprenticeship Week in February and provides opportunities to join working groups, and sub-group meetings.

The network is employer-led, but we are open to accepting exceptional training providers with a proven track record in supporting diversity, and representative bodies.

For more information on the network, or how to join please check the [ADCN.Gov](https://www.adcn.gov.uk) webpage.

## About this Report

During National Apprenticeship Week 2021 the ADCN convened to discuss what our focus for the year was. Led by our chair, Lia Nici, the network collectively agreed to focus on four key areas for the year 2021-22.

The areas agreed to were:

- Black, Asian and ethnic minority participation
- Learning difficulties and disabilities participation
- Women in STEM sector roles
- Progression into, and through apprenticeships

Although diversity, inclusion and social mobility is broad, the network agreed that focussing on these areas would allow us to probe deeper.

The network then set up four working groups, led by and participated in by volunteers from the network. Through discussion groups, sharing of best practice, and additional research the findings of these groups are published in this report.

## Nikita's Story

Nikita left school with BTECs and no GCSEs and decided to go back into education and study Motor Vehicle Level 1 and 2 with a cleaning job in the mornings before going to college.

She moved and found it very difficult to find work and eventually found herself living in supported accommodation due to circumstances out of her control, but it gave her the motivation to press on and find a secure career.

Her support worker posted a leaflet through her door for the Movement to Work scheme. She secured a place on the taster day and got a place on the scheme with BAE Systems. At the end of the scheme, she was offered a job as an apprentice electrical technician which she says was the proudest day of her life so far.

She has now moved out of supported accommodation and living in her own flat and working in the 'job of her dreams' and couldn't be happier.



# Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Participation

## Progress so Far

This year's apprenticeship figures have shown continued growth in black, Asian, and ethnic minority uptake, with the Government exceeding its target to increase representation by 20% (to 12.1%) by 2020. 13.3% representation was achieved in 2019/20, which has since increased to **14%** so far in 2020/21.

Additionally, representation of people from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds increases at Apprenticeship **level 4** and above, with over-representation occurring at levels 4, 6 and 7. This is extremely positive as it indicates that people from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to go into higher-paying, higher-level apprenticeships that support more advanced career stages.

However, it is recognised that representation is not evenly distributed across age groups. Apprentices from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be over the age of 25, with representation of younger people, particularly in the 16-19 age range is decreasing.

This has also been highlighted by the report published by the **Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities**, which recognised the huge, positive impact that apprenticeships can have on people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds. However, these opportunities were not being as readily accessed by younger people from minority backgrounds.

## ADCN Working Group Findings:

This year we set up a working group within the ADCN who explored some of the key issues that act as barriers to engaging and taking on apprentices from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds. The group was led by Kathryn Marshall of Lloyds Banking Group, and Siobhan White of Resource Productions. Findings from the group included:

### 1) Regional Trends

Data has shown us that people from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds make up more of the local population in some regions. Different communities also tend to be more represented in some regions more than others. It is therefore key that employers understand what that representation looks like in their local area, and recognise when their workforce does not truly reflect representation.

- The group emphasised the value of knowing the demographics of your local area and making sure that your brand as an employer is known locally and recognised by all communities.
- The group recommended utilising the expertise of the local colleges and independent training providers delivering your apprenticeship training. Talk to them to better understand how to reach black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups that are under-represented in your workplace. They will often have a lot of local insight and experience in attraction and recruitment that you can tap in to.



## 2) Change Needs to Start at the Top

- The group recommended that senior leaders should be communicating clearly that selection and recruitment processes must be unbiased and make every effort to be as inclusive as possible.
- The group felt people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds are least well represented in leadership positions. Employers should raise awareness of higher level apprenticeships and target opportunities at staff from black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups.

### Lloyds Banking Group – Senior Leaders’ Commitment

Our Race Action Plan introduced a set of commitments to address the specific challenges faced by Black colleagues, as well as Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in our organisation.

We’ve always stood against discrimination in all its forms. We also consistently strive for inclusion and equality. And as the world continues to change around us, it’s now become more important than ever that we accomplish our commitments.

The plan is focused on recruitment, culture, and progression within our business, and how we can support Black communities externally.

There has been a positive shift in our culture since the plan was launched. A key step was the establishment of our Race Advisory Panel. The Panel now works exceptionally well as a “sounding board” to provide an invaluable perspective, while also ensuring that the decision-making process on both new and ongoing activities and initiatives remains fully informed.

Now, senior leaders across all organisations are both listening with intent and striving to understand the struggles of being Black in the UK. Discussing the challenges, we face at work in ways that were previously unimaginable. For example, Lloyds Banking Group CEO, Charlie Nunn demonstrated his real believe in the values through reverse mentoring, where his has a mentor who is a black woman, actively looking to understand, be guided, pushed and challenge through 2022 and beyond to make more progress.

A similar approach has been used to get feedback specifically from our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic apprentices and to work closely with all our Training Providers on understanding what we can do differently.

Our Race Action Plan constitutes the Group’s committed to creating a place where diversity is celebrated, and all contributions are valued without prejudice or judgement. In short, a truly inclusive place for all.



**Sam Owo - Race Action Plan Lead**

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### 3) Challenging Perceptions and Changing Views

The group fed back that they often struggle to engage with young people (16-24) from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds due to negative perceptions of apprenticeships. This view can also be held by influential people in the lives of those young people such as parents, teachers, and peers.

- In tackling this the group felt it is critical for employers to present role models who reflect the diversity of their workforce.
- This can be through nominating apprentices from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds for apprenticeship awards, including the National Apprenticeship Awards, releasing case studies about outstanding individuals, and encouraging these individuals to represent the company at public-facing events such as local careers fairs, media, and presentations.

### Marjana's Story

BBC apprentice Marjana Uddin is an inspiration and leader for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community. She has brought a fresh perspective and energy to the BBC's legal team and is respected by everyone for her talent and her willingness to break through boundaries.

Marjana was a very talented A level student. She was keen to study for a legal career and had a place to study law at her chosen university, but then she discovered the BBC Legal Apprenticeship. She was successful in being offered a place on the BBC's Level 3 Paralegal Apprenticeship when she was just 18 and has now progressed onto the Level 7 Solicitor Apprenticeship as she aims to qualify as a Lawyer.

Marjana's line manager Maria Kell said: "Marjana embodies everything we look for in our aspiring lawyers because she is bright, focused and dedicated, but also questioning and ambitious. She has succeeded as a result of her own hard work and determination and opened doors for others too."



# Thames Valley Police (TVP) Positive Action & Engagement Team



## The Challenge

Policing in the UK has historically struggled to be truly representative of the communities it serves and the same is true for Thames Valley Police (TVP). We are a large force covering the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire. Whilst those from Black, Asian, or Mixed ethnicity backgrounds represent about 15% of our local population, our officer numbers within those demographics are much lower.

We understood that one common problem was that members of the public failed to see any officers who looked like them. Would they be welcomed into the force? Would the force understand and respect their ethnicity, cultural beliefs, values, and practices?

## The Solution

In 2019 TVP created a team of operational Police Officers from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to form a Positive Action & Engagement Team.

The team focuses on building engagement with our under-represented communities. Building a better understanding of policing, gaining trust, and encouraging them to consider a career. They highlight our two key apprenticeships: the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) and the Police Community Support Officer Apprenticeship (PCSOA).

The PCDA is a 3-year programme of blended operational and academic learning, with learning accredited with a Degree in Professional Policing Practice upon completion.

The team work on outreach activity in our communities. They then support potential candidates through the application and recruitment process, providing advice and guidance to those who may not be familiar with policing. Further support, mentoring and coaching once in-force ensures that their personal and professional development remains a priority.

## The Impact

The team have delivered hundreds of events to date from Open Events and Familiarisation Sessions to Information Events prior to applying, taking assessments or interviews.

The team also attend cultural events and schools in locations around our force to educate under-represented communities about policing.

In the past year, Thames Valley Police have seen the number of new joiners from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds increase by 7%, compared to the previous 3-year average. People from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds now represent 13% of our new starters.

In response to this success, the force has committed more investment into the team so that this important work can continue.

# Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) Participation

## Progress so Far

There has been a steady increase in participation for people with LDD in apprenticeships, meeting Government targets for 2020. However, according to *The employment of disabled people 2021*, published November 2021 it is estimated (no exact figure is known due to declaration rates) that around **20%** of the population have an LDD. This could be a 'hidden', 'visible', or multiple and complex disability.

It's really important that employers ensure they are creating a safe and supportive environment in order for individuals to feel comfortable to talk about any concerns or barriers they feel they may have, and to disclose a learning difficulty or disability.

This is because some people with learning difficulties and disabilities (including mental health and neurodiversity) may not feel comfortable disclosing they have a learning difficulty or a disability. This can mean they might not get the support or adjustments they need to fully achieve their potential. Some people may not even recognise or be aware that they have a learning difficulty, or disability.

The three case studies in this section illustrate how this can feel from an individual's perspective and how two employers have identified and tackled potential barriers within their organisations.

People with LDD are also more likely not to be in education, employment, or training.

To help address this, employers have a range of support available to them such as becoming Disability Confident and accessing the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) Access to Work, which helps people with LDD in the workplace. [Access to Work](#)

For apprentices with LDD on off-the-job training, they can have additional learning needs funded by [Additional Learning Support](#).

During National Apprenticeship Week 2022, Disability Rights UK also produced an apprentice-facing report titled [Getting it Right for Disabled Apprentices](#), which provides insight and advice for apprentices with disabilities.



## Faith's Story

Working for Lloyds Banking Group, Faith was looking to focus on her own development and researched into the degree apprenticeships that were on offer and was drawn to the Digital and Technology Solutions Degree Apprenticeship. She was really interested and thought it would be a great way to develop, and get a degree without the financial burden.

Although interested, Faith didn't apply, because she had lots of questions and doubts:

- I am a disabled colleague, so how would that work?
- I have dyslexia; I have been able to work out ways to overcome the difficulties at work, I am not sure I am going to be able to do that in an academic setting?
- I have physical disabilities – Will this cause more hinderance, or position me with a disadvantage from the offset?
- I have two young children, how will I be able to juggle work, home, and university work?
- I haven't been in an education setting for over 20 years, and don't have the GCSE they are asking for, would I even get a place?



A year later Faith decided to apply. Not expecting to be accepted she was given a conditional offer within two weeks. She still had doubts including the need to obtain functional skills level 2 within the first year. Faith rang the disabilities line with the training provider to ask about blue badge parking and they put her through to an adviser, who was great asking more about her disabilities and arranging for her to be assessed over the phone.

A personal learning plan was put in place covering things like use of a computer in exams instead of pen and paper and extra time. Following that she had an assessment – and got the software and equipment to support her learning.

Faith is now in year two, and really enjoying her apprenticeship, having a good work life balance and her disabilities are not now a concern for her goal to complete her degree apprenticeship.

## ADCN Working Group Findings

Led by Kathryn Marshall of Lloyds Banking Group, the LDD working group wanted to understand more about best practices and perceived barriers from an employer perspective.

The group launched a survey amongst employers to gather insight that would enable the group to be more informed about current attitudes and awareness on recruitment as well as on programme support.

### Declaring Learning Difficulties or Disabilities

- Most employers reported they actively ask candidates to declare any disability as part of the recruitment process to allow for reasonable adjustments.
- Most employers felt comfortable with managing reasonable adjustments as part of the recruitment process and did not report this as being a barrier.

- It is up to an individual whether or not they choose to discuss an impairment or condition that they might have. Two thirds of respondents felt there was sometimes a reluctance for individuals to disclose or declare a learning difficulty or disability when making an application or during the recruitment stage - which could then act as a barrier to employers recruiting more apprentices with learning difficulties or disabilities.

**Recommendation** - The Group recommended that the importance of disclosure is highlighted to potential candidates through employers, agencies, schools etc to give the confidence that the disclosure will support the individual rather than count against them. In addition, employers should review all stages of their recruitment process to ensure there is a safe and supportive environment for individuals to talk about any concerns or barriers.

## Assessment and Support

- The theme of disclosure followed through when reviewing the barriers to supporting apprentices on programme with the top three barriers or areas of challenge being: understanding how to best support apprentices with disabilities, lack of disclosure and requirements for maths and English.
- A number of respondents were not aware of the assessment that Training Providers should complete to confirm additional support requirements. However, for those who were aware, they were happy with the support delivered by their Training Provider.

The group felt that assessment is also extremely valuable in supporting apprentices who are not aware that they have a learning difficulty or disability, for example those with chronic health conditions, or who are neurodivergent. It can also capture people with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, who may not have been diagnosed previously. By ensuring that they take the time to work with their training providers, employers can understand how best to support their apprentices and get the best out of them.

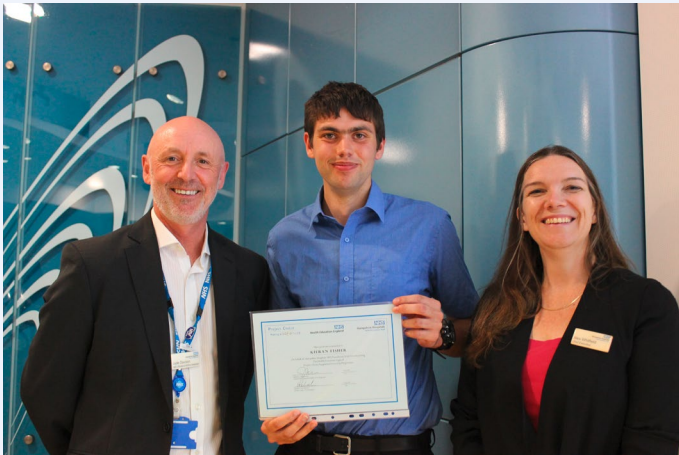
**Recommendation** - The Group recommended that further guidance is provided to employers to ensure they are aware of the assessments that Training Providers should complete, they understand how to best to support apprentices with disabilities and how they can access that support. Guidance on reasonable adjustments was highlighted as being most beneficial to employers along with a central list/source of information on charities who provide additional support.

## The Benefits

- When asked what the benefits of apprentices with LDD are as seen by the business, respondent's top three reasons were:
  1. increased diversity
  2. understanding of their disabilities
  3. improved knowledge
- The benefits were summarised by one employer as: "We have a number of employees with a wide range of LDD, they all bring their unique refreshing way to look at projects from a different perspective".



# NHS Hampshire Hospital Trusts



## The Challenge

It can be challenging, but it's the right thing to do and the advantages outweigh any barriers. By making the initial investment and putting in place inclusive processes, employers are more likely to attract and retain greater talent. Equality, diversity, and inclusion is high on the national agenda, and it is important that employers work actively to break down barriers and ensure that a greater number of employees have access to apprenticeships.

Our employers have said: "we've benefitted enormously, it's helped us look at the way we deliver our training programmes in the department".

## The Impact

Recruiting apprentices with LDD means that the workforce is more diverse and better representative of the local community. Especially with the inclusion of pre-apprenticeship and workplace programmes, apprentices benefit from a supported transition into employment and further training.

Hiring and supporting apprentices with LDD offers departments and the organisation a way to reflect on and improve their existing processes to make these more inclusive. For example, considering what reasonable adjustments could be implemented e.g., extra time, changes to shift patterns, a support system at work.

## Sharing Best Practice

### Recruitment

Recruitment processes may unfairly disadvantage apprentices with LDD and where appropriate, reasonable adjustments should be made at each stage of the process. For example, employers could offer a work trial rather than an interview, allowing someone to better demonstrate their skills.

### Education and training

Managers may be worried about how to support a learner with LDD. Sharing case studies and hearing first-hand from apprentices can be a powerful way to engage with employers. When choosing a training provider, it may be useful to ask about their experience of working with apprentices with LDD, so assurance can be met that the training will be adapted to an individual's learning needs.

### Additional support and adjustments

Learners with LDD may require additional learning support and adjustments to progress in their apprenticeship. For example, this may include allowing extra time or providing a dedicated 'go to' support person in the team. Whilst this may take more upfront investment, in the long term, employers should retain a highly skilled apprentice and a more diverse workforce.

### Funding

Supporting learners with LDD may take additional resource and it can be challenging to understand what additional support is available to help fund this. Training providers can request additional funding to pay for reasonable adjustments for learning support, but the process can be time consuming and difficult to understand so work closely with them.

## The Challenge

Traditionally it would have been incredibly hard for a student with LDD to gain a role within Labcorp. This is due to the nature of the business and the fact that the main entrance routes in too many of the roles require a degree education to enter. This had led to us predominately hiring the same type of person. With this in mind, and with a commitment to increase the social mobility of those individuals in the local area a commitment was made to develop a programme that would address this issue.

## The Solution

Our supported internship programme is set up as a pre-apprenticeship opportunity featuring a yearlong industrial placement for candidates that may have additional needs and runs alongside our specialist providers Harrogate skills for life. The internship sees individuals spend part of their week on site with us at Labcorp Harrogate and the other part of their time at the college, learning vital skills with which to improve their life.

The aim of the programme was not only offer individuals the opportunity to develop but also to help educate and develop our internal employees to remove any type of previous opinions therefore enabling a more accepting approach for the future.

We had to gain buy in from a number of stakeholders: company directors, the board of trustees at the charities and local parents. This was done through a series of presentations, talks and clear communications to outline the programme and what we wanted to achieve. We also include some structure training for managers delivered by our charitable partners that included awareness and mental health training.

A project like this required a variety of different resources to be put in place and a team to look after this project with members voluntarily giving up time outside of their normal job roles. It also involved several resources such as budgetary commitment to expand out our risk assessments and make adjustments to allow the individuals to come in to work as well as training and development time.

## The Impact

As a result of this project, we have seen an increase in the awareness internally to individuals with additional needs and that they are capable of carrying out many roles in the company. We have seen most of the individuals who have taken part in our programme progress into an apprenticeship and have now expanded the programme out to 3 new departments and have increased the number of positions by another 7 places; bringing in another charity to help us spread the programme further.

We have received a local heroes award for this programme and have used this to raise the profile of social mobility and inclusion both nationally and internationally with our internal departments and with companies we interact with.

We have managed to achieve all our initial goals that we set for the project by creating 5 placements and raising the aspirations of these individuals through meaningful work and education and changing the perceptions of our internal employees making them more open minded to social mobility.

# Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing (STEM) Sector Roles

## Progress so Far

The ADCN is passionately committed to improving the representation of women (including those who identify as female) in historically male-dominated sectors. These STEM sector roles (including construction) carry some of the most critical skills gaps in the country, as well as some of the highest wage returns.

There is evidence to suggest that the apprenticeship **gender pay gap** is not closing due to women's under-representation in higher paying sectors, and over-representation in sectors that tend to pay lower wages.

Women made up 52.9% apprenticeship starts in 2020-21 but remain extremely under-represented in STEM subjects only making up around **11.4%** starts in those roles. We are seeing some improvement in ICT-based roles, but growth is much slower in engineering, manufacturing, and construction roles. Even in ICT, representation still falls far short of 50%.

## Luciana's story

Luciana stayed on in school until 6th year but didn't come away with a clear idea of the career path that she wanted to follow. She was from a rural town where there aren't as many opportunities for school leavers.

Luciana volunteered for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and grew up around the rescue service. She had always been a hands-on person and loved helping to prepare the boats going out on rescues.

A pre-employment course with Movement to Work helped her build the right experience to get a job. She is now completing a three-and-a-half-year Steelwork Apprenticeship.

Luciana says she loves working at BAE Systems and wants to stay in the organisation. "I know I will be supported in progressing as far as I choose."

## ADCN Working Group Findings

The working group were keen to look at how we can get more women apprentices in STEM because a strong talent pipeline of women is a critical factor in ensuring fairer gender distribution in the future and allowing women to benefit from the skills and increased wage returns these jobs offer.

To address this, the group led by Joanne Gogerly from Siemens, and Karen Wallbridge from Transport for London chose to break down the apprenticeship cycle to gauge where women could be engaged in STEM role apprenticeships. This includes women returning to work after an extended career break.

The group found that the cycle starts even earlier than anticipated and that employers can do more to work with girls and women much earlier than they may believe.

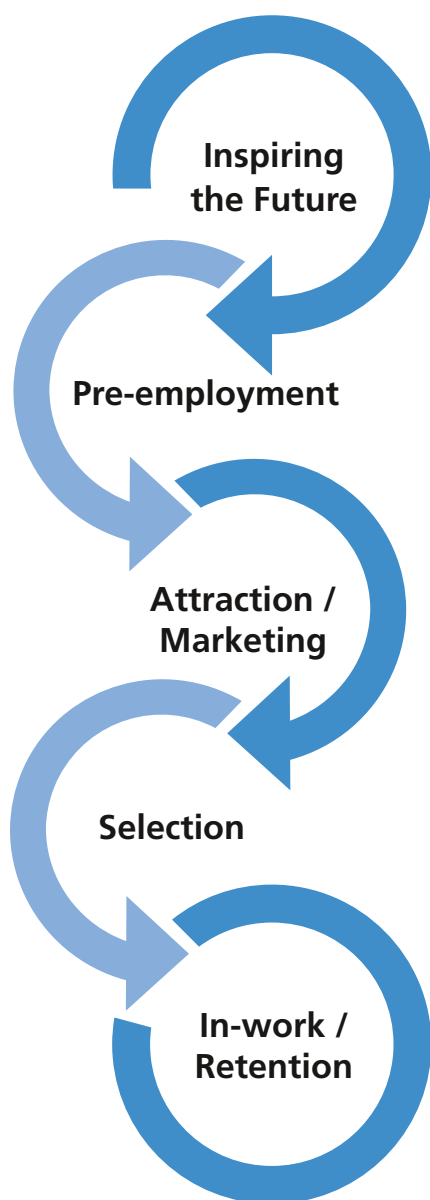
## Summary of Findings:

The group invited external experts, with a proven track record of improving the representation of women in STEM, to brief the group and add to the knowledge and experience of group members. This helped in developing the toolkit and the activities and interventions included in it.

To support apprentice employers, the group have designed an **interactive toolkit**, an on-line resource which will be shared after National Apprenticeship Week. The toolkit is based on actions that an employer can take at different stages of the cycle to engage more girls and women in their sector and will be available through the ADCN.Gov webpage **Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))**

# Women in STEM Apprenticeship Life Cycle

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**1. Inspiring the Future** - Donna Stevens of the Girls School Association told us “That free of stereotypes, girls are significantly more likely to study STEM subjects.”

**2. Pre-employment** - London Transport Museum emphasised the impact of pre-employment opportunities to engage girls and women with hands-on experience of STEM sector roles. This session also explored ways in which to improve outreach to women and girls to build up a pipeline.

**3. Attraction and Marketing** - Nottingham City Homes demonstrated how they had significantly increased female representation in their construction and engineering apprenticeships through their Women in Construction initiative. They outlined how critical women in trade role models are to dispel preconceptions.

**4. Selection** - The group looked at where many employers traditionally see their role beginning. Cappfinity explained how they used a strengths-based approach to selection, to measure potential and set more inclusive criteria. This broadens traditional views of who has potential and looks beyond experience to acknowledge motivation instead.

**5. In-work and Retention** - the group looked at how to better ensure that once organisations have taken all the right measures to create a pipeline of women for their roles, reviewed their processes to ensure their outreach is effective and their recruitment processes are more inclusive, they are not losing the women in post once they are in a STEM-based role.



# Inspiring Future Generations

## Transport for London: Route into Work – Pre-employment Programme

### The Challenge

In 2018 we unfortunately experienced poor representation of women entering our Level 3 Engineering Apprenticeship schemes. This was a particular issue in our London Underground Maintenance Engineering Apprenticeships where we had 0% representation of women.

After analysing the applications, two issues were identified. Firstly, there was a lack of women applying for the roles, and secondly, those who applied were not successful in progressing through the recruitment process. As a result, we needed a solution that addressed both these challenges.

### The Solution

Our aim was to address the traditional stereotypical perceptions of maintenance engineering only being for men whilst also overcoming barriers to employment that some women face. We turned to Route in to Work, a short employability programme delivered by London Transport Museum with participants referred by partner organisations including Job Centre Plus.

The four-day programme enabled participants to gain insight into what the role involved, visit work sites, build their confidence, understand their potential, develop their skills, all the while having access to role models and receiving intensive support in preparation for the recruitment process.



### The Impact

An overall increase in representation of women within our Level 3 Engineering Apprenticeship programmes was achieved. Representation of women rose from 0% in 2018 to 20% in 2019 and then to 27% in 2020. Our London Underground Fleet Engineering Level 3 Apprenticeship achieved gender parity for the first time.

Not only were we able to increase representation of women but we were also able to make an impact on social mobility and increase confidence for the participants involved. Many had been unemployed for several years and the intensive support the programme provided enabled them to demonstrate and recognise their full potential.

Sarah, a Route into Work candidate from 2018 found it to be a positive experience.

‘Now I know what to expect from both the apprenticeship and the assessment. My mental health has improved. I had big insecurities around freezing up at interviews. My self-esteem has grown. For the first time in my life, I know that I can do this.’



# Inspiring Future Generations

## Siemens - SeeMe

### The Challenge

Our apprentice applications were predominantly male in 2015 and as a business we questioned whether unconscious bias was taking place within our recruitment process itself. Our research revealed otherwise. When girls did apply, they did better than the males, but not enough were applying! Our 5-year focus was to ensure perceptions around STEM subjects and career opportunities inspired young women. We set ourselves a goal to have 20% female apprentices within our business by 2020.

### The Solution

The Seewomen project was launched on International Women's Day in 2016. Collaboratively with partners such as Girls Schools Association, Zinc Media, and Fran Scott from CBBs we created a "SeeWomen" programme consisting of a stage-show and supporting teacher training resources that presents a spotlight on modern STEM female role models within industry.

Our aim is to overcome the current skills gap and gender imbalance within the engineering industry today. The show explores women's ground-breaking contributions to STEM and identifies the range and scope of careers available within the STEM arena.

It challenges any stereotypes or barriers girls aged between 11-14 may have such as "STEM is dull, boring or just for boys". Overall, these resources encourage girls to revise and reflect upon their aspirations prior to taking their options so they can fully consider future career choices.



### The Impact

We've delivered at 20 different locations across the UK and achieved outreach levels of over 4,000 with 60 schools participating.

Our initial objective was to support the target of 20% female apprentices, a catalyst for engagement which was achieved in 2019 (our gender stats in early careers is now closer to 40%).

Using this innovative medium positions Siemens as an engaged equal employer of choice, addressing gender imbalance.

70% of the girls who participated in SeeWomen felt inspired to find out more about a career in STEM. Compared with 38% at the start.

Teacher feedback includes "A fantastic insight for students pitched at the perfect level, the students are still talking about it! This is a highly effective, informative and fun way to engage students with STEM."

We've created longer term STEM partnerships between schools. For more information visit: [www.siemens.co.uk/education](http://www.siemens.co.uk/education)

# Progression Into, and Through Apprenticeships

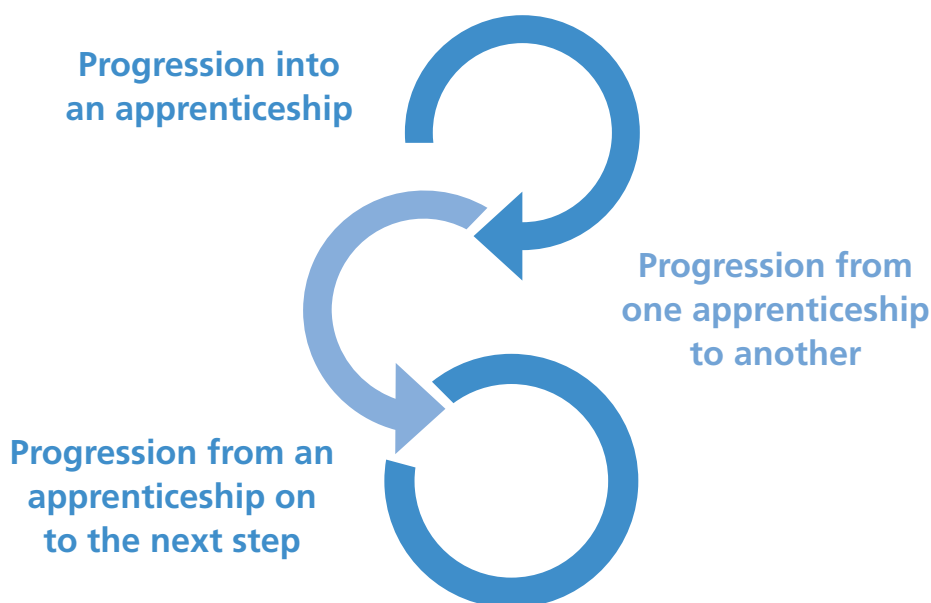
## Progress so Far

Apprenticeships are a proven route to a successful career for people of all ages. They form a key stepping-stone, whether that is on leaving school or college, or as part of a career progression route while working.

For employers of all sizes, they provide a structured training and development route to **maximise the talent** you are bringing into your organisation, or to support existing staff grow and develop their skills. Either way they bring tangible benefits to your business and offer so much more than a quick fix for a skills gap.

The ADCN pinpointed three powerful reasons why progression matters;

1. Progression is about both progressing through the levels of apprenticeships and, from **pre-employment programmes**, like traineeships, onto apprenticeships. Individuals who engage in such programmes should have the very best chance of going on to secure an apprenticeship and for the employers, who support these programmes, they are a strong feeder for their apprenticeships.
2. We are focused on encouraging diverse talent to seriously consider apprenticeships and supporting employers to grow their diversity through apprenticeships. There is no doubt, employers are working harder to attract and hire more diverse talent, but if that new and diverse talent, once employed, does not progress the risk is they will leave, so employers end up with another gap and all their efforts are wasted.
3. Sadly, there is compelling evidence that the career progression of those from under-represented talent groups is slower, for example up to **25% slower** in Financial Services for those from a lower socio-economic background. So, employers face two 'pains' by not addressing equity of progression, first that potential loss of home-grown talent and second, lower productivity with under-utilised talent, not to mention the unfairness of that slower progression!



## ADCN Working Group Findings

The group led by Simon Reichwald, Strategic Lead for Talent with Connectr, a social enterprise, focused on using technology to support under-represented individuals get into work and to progress when in work, started by testing their thinking with both employers and apprentices to determine the meaning of 'progression'.

They concluded:

**“Apprentice progression is necessarily individual to that apprentice and will invariably be dominated by the mastering of skills, knowledge and behaviour with relation to their role, and / or continuing career development.”**

**For Employers** - From an employer perspective, progression will be driven by their organisation's needs and the role the apprentice is undertaking, and may include:

- Improved staff retention.
- Bringing in and developing new skills and knowledge, and improved behaviours (soft skills), to benefit the business.
- Improved succession planning.
- Increased productivity and efficiency.

**For Apprentices** - Progression can come in different, non-linear, steps depending on the individual and their profession, often with multiple options. This may include:

- Improving and developing their career prospects.
- Continuing to another qualification such as a degree to deepen specialism.
- Getting promoted and/or pay rise.
- Attaining permanent employment.
- Identifying a new career pathway.

## Emily's Story

Emily started a Level 2 Commis Chef Apprenticeship at the Cross Keys Stow restaurant working with training provider HIT Training. She says her apprenticeship has given her a seamless work-life balance as she was able to complete most of her training at work.

“My apprenticeship helped me find my true purpose and realise that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. Now I have confidence and experience in a career I love with a nationally recognised qualification to go along with it!”

Emily has now been working at the Cross Keys Stow for over two years and feels completing her apprenticeship is the best decision she ever made because it helped to realise her potential. Having completed her Commis Chef apprenticeship with distinction and due to the monumental progress, she had made, Emily has now started her Level 3 Chef de Partie Apprenticeship.

In the future she hopes to gain further skills and experience, develop more dishes, and have more responsibility in a leading role at the Cross Keys Stow.

The Group decided that having tested their initial thinking with employers and apprentices they would use two short surveys, with ADCN members and their apprentices, to consolidate the key points relating to progression. As with many surveys, while providing good evidence and pointers they also generated some further questions and points to follow up in 2022.

## Employers

- When asked what apprentice success looked like in their organisations the top 4 responses from employers were 1) retention, 2) increased diversity and talent, 3) progression, and 4) career development.
- In terms of progression into Apprenticeships – work experience (in a variety of formats and duration) was most supported by the employers who responded.
- When asked what encourages their organisations to progress apprentices this was strongly seen as meeting skill needs, followed by growing diversity and improving performance.
- For barriers to apprenticeship progression within organisations, the two most common barriers experienced by employers were, no job roles available post completion and differing expectations – apprentice vs employer.

Having reviewed the feedback from the survey the working group also identified several recommendations and areas of best practice in supporting progression:

**Recommendation** – the group thought it would be useful to look deeper into the differing expectations of employers vs apprentices when it came to progression, to understand the issue better and pull together

some potential activities to support this.

**Best Practice** - It is critical that employers make the best use of development conversations with their apprentices. During these conversations try to break down the barriers in perception as to what progression looks like for your apprentice.

**Best Practice** – Employers to build in career and next step conversations with apprentices and, where possible, early conversations on future possibilities.

**Best Practice** - Clearly defined apprenticeships as alternative entry routes into career paths and identify where the business can provide support and roles which enable progression.

**Best Practice** - Make sure there are clear links to workforce and succession planning. Where possible provide a matching process into job roles to encourage and support career progression.

## Apprentices

The survey for apprentices was deliberately kept short and focused on what success in their apprenticeship meant to them. Most apprentices selected:

- Having knowledge and skills to better achieve more in my employment.
- Progressing into further employment after completing my apprenticeship.

Which link in positively to the key factors driving employers to progress apprentices.

## Zaman's Story

With Zaman's success at college, he faced a great deal of pressure from family, friends, and teachers to apply for a university place. However, he knew that he did not want to continue in full-time education as he understood the benefits an apprenticeship could bring by allowing him to work and learn simultaneously.

He successfully applied for a Digital and Technology Solutions Degree Apprenticeship with Lloyds Banking Group and over the course of the apprenticeship, transitioned from a newcomer in the Cyber Security Industry with no prior work experience, to a certified Cyber Security Subject Matter Expert. Managing a small team of Cyber Security Specialists, he has moved up five promotion grades in the space of three years - a meteoric rise which he says was only possible his apprenticeship programme.

Now working as a Senior Technical Assurance Engineer, Zaman is a tireless advocate for apprenticeships. Working closely with students and schools he aims to inspire future apprentices, including supporting students with CVs, applications, and interviews, and working closely with their BAME families for them to understand what an apprenticeship could bring over going to university.





# BAE Systems - Progression into Apprenticeships



## The Challenge

BAE Systems is a technology-led defence and aerospace business with over 35,000 employees in the UK, with many skills required which are challenging to recruit in the marketplace.

Apprenticeships are vital for us to meet our future skills needs while also providing a pipeline of diverse talent. This involves close liaison and development of education programmes with our local communities, education partners, local and central government. This collaboration is essential to ensure strong progression of skilled talent into our workforce.

## The Solution

To ensure we are able to deliver programmes to meet our skills needs, we work through the Apprenticeship Trailblazer groups with other employers, including the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy, to have high quality standards in place that our business and industry require.

As part of our commitment to young people from all backgrounds, to helping our local communities 'level up', we partner with the Prince's Trust through Movement to Work and have an extensive school education programme. Our ambassadors engaged with young people at almost 700 events last year.

Our apprentices are helping to design an Industry Placement component for the new Engineering T Level which will be piloted in 2022. We see T Levels as a solid route for providing a more diverse pipeline to our business in the future.

## The Impact

A record 851 apprentices recruited in 2021 and over 2,500 in training.

26% of the 2021 intake were from the most disadvantaged communities.

Through Movement to Work we have had up to 78% positive outcomes, with typically 30 people going on to an apprenticeship each year.

We have a strong track record of apprentices progressing well beyond their apprenticeship, completion rates are currently 95%.

Of those who complete c.90% are still with the Company 10 years later.

Previous apprentices have progressed in the organisation, for example the Managing Directors of both our Air Sector and Submarines businesses started as apprentices.



# What Next?

The ADCN are extremely proud of the hard work that group members have put in this year (2021-22). In testing circumstances, group members have continued to demonstrate commitment to improving diversity and have shared their experiences in order to help other employers make positive change.

The contents of this report are intended for sharing and replication. Many of the actions and case studies outlined could be doable whatever the size of your organisation. Most importantly, many examples of action taken demonstrate that organisations don't always need to undertake major change programmes to make a noticeable impact.

Many interventions identified in this document are adaptable: often starting with having a conversation, making small changes where employers are currently engaging possible recruits, and looking for role models within their own organisation who reflect a workforce that looks more like the local community.

## But We're Not Done Yet!

This report reflects a year of progress, and key conversations within the ADCN. We are keen to reflect and celebrate success so far; each success story is a real person whose life has been changed for the better through their apprenticeship, and a real organisation which is seeing the benefits of bringing that person on board.

As ever though, there is still more to do:

- The government's focus on **levelling up** reflects just how critical it is to ensure that people from socio-economically poor, and disadvantaged backgrounds continue to access life-changing apprenticeships.

- The continued **wage gap** experienced by women, people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds in certain sectors, and those declaring a learning difficulty or disability provides a reminder that these groups are still under-represented in higher-paid apprenticeships.
- **Young people** continue to be at a disadvantage when applying for roles due to a traditional focus on experience over potential, which leads to ageing workforces in key sectors and skills gaps. Despite the new and fresh views, they bring to the organisation.

## Key Focus: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The ADCN and Department for Education are particularly interested in the views and practical experience of SMEs. If you are a small business, please consider joining the network or getting involved in any of the ways outlined below.

SMEs continue to make up the majority of businesses across the UK and often sit at the heart of diverse communities. It is only through making changes within SMEs as well as large businesses that we will see the essential changes to fill skills gaps and make each sector more productive and innovative.

If you are a large or macro employer, then please consider your role in supporting and encouraging small business, either through your **local employer networks, levy transfers, or through your supply chain.**

## What You Can Do

Employers, providers, and interested parties reading this report are strongly encouraged to take away the findings, recommendations and best practice, and discuss how they can apply them to their own business.

The ADCN and Department for Education are also very keen to hear about what else is working to improve representation of under-represented groups in apprenticeships. If you have examples of best practice, role models, or want to be involved take a look at:

- The National Apprenticeship site [Apprenticeships](#)
- Consider joining the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, [AAN](#)
- Encourage your apprentices to join the Young Apprentice Ambassador Network, [YAAN](#)
- Encourage any current or former apprentices with disabilities to join the Disabled Apprentice Network [Disabled Apprentice-Network](#)

- Get involved with National Apprenticeship Week, [NAW 2022](#)
- Apply for the National Apprenticeship Awards, [National Apprenticeship Awards](#)
- Get a better understanding of the published data that is available through the [Education Statistics Service](#),
- Mentoring is proven to be a powerful process to develop apprentices when it comes progressing in their careers - mentees are five times more likely to be promoted. Using technology to enable mentoring to happen at scale and manage it more easily, as well as track the impact, is key to success. As an example of this, ADCN member, [Connectr](#) have teamed up with the Department for Work And Pensions to launch a [National Mentoring Programme](#) leveraging technology.

And of course, join the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network [ADCN](#)