YOUNG WOMEN'S TRUST

MAKING APPRENTICESHIPS WORK FOR YOUNG WOMEN – SUMMARY

This new report looks at how young women continue to miss out on the many benefits apprenticeships have to offer. It is based on original research through focus groups with young women and polling of 1,269 young people to understand their experiences of apprenticeships. Young women from Young Women's Trust's apprenticeship working group were then brought together with employers, government officials, think tanks and charities to discuss the challenges and prioritise actions forming the basis for the recommendations.

Much has changed since apprenticeships mainly acted as a route into trades for men with few opportunities for women. Last year 264,750 women and 235,140 men began apprenticeships. This would seem to represent one of the huge successes of the apprenticeship programme. However, the reality is not so clear-cut.

At their best apprenticeships can offer young people new skills and excellent routes into employment, help employers fill skills gaps and make a huge contribution to a productive economy. Sadly not all apprenticeships are created equal and it is young women who are losing out at every level.

Young women have told us they are presented with a limited choice of apprenticeships. They get paid less than male apprentices, are less likely to receive training and are more likely to be out of a job at the end of their apprenticeship.

As the Government strives to meet its target of creating 3 million apprentices by the end of this parliament in 2020, it is important to prevent these trends becoming further entrenched. When apprenticeships work for young women they will better serve our businesses and our economy. Urgent action is needed to make this happen.

THERE ARE **25 MEN** FOR EVERY WOMAN STARTING AN APPRENTICESHIP IN ENGINEERING

THERE ARE 74 MEN FOR EVERY FEMALE APPRENTICE IN PLUMBING

WOMEN APPRENTICES RECEIVE LOWER HOURLY PAY THAN MEN

£4.82 £5.85

MALE APPRENTICES GET PAID 21% MORE PER HOUR MAKING WOMEN MORE THAN £2000 WORSE OFF PER YEAR

16% OF YOUNG WOMEN SAID THEY WERE OUT OF WORK FOLLOWING AN APPRENTICESHIP COMPARED TO 6% OF MEN

WOMEN ARE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE OUT OF WORK AT THE END OF THEIR APPRENTICESHIP

OUR KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Young Women's Trust believes that in order to make apprenticeships work for young women it is essential that:

1. Positive action is taken to increase diversity in apprenticeships

a) Where it can be shown that the number of women undertaking apprenticeships in any given sector (for example Engineering, IT or construction) is disproportionately low, employers should consider whether they can take positive action to increase the participation of women.

This could include: setting targets, reserving places on training courses, providing work experience opportunities, explicitly welcoming applications from women, providing mentors or adapting the language used in job adverts.

b) Employers and training providers should remove formal academic entry requirements for apprenticeships unless they are directly necessary for performing the role.

c) Employers should develop a diversity action plan for their apprenticeship schemes.

d) The new Institute for Apprenticeships should have a diversity strand as part of its work.

2. Greater emphasis is placed on the collection and publication of data relating to apprenticeships

a) Employers should publish the number of apprenticeships they employ, completion rates and destinations with the figures broken down by age, gender, ethnicity, disability, apprenticeship level and role.

b) Employers should publish targets for the ratio of male to female apprentices.

c) Public sector employers should lead the way on setting gender targets as part of their plans to increase the number of apprentices.

3. Pay and financial support for apprentices is increased

a) The Government should commit to moving towards a single Living Wage for all age groups, regardless of apprenticeship status.

b) Funding should be made available for discounted or complimentary travel for apprentices.

c) Apprentices should be able to access support to cover childcare costs on the same basis as other workers.

4. There is a greater availability of part-time and flexible apprenticeships

a) Employers should make more apprenticeships available with the possibility of taking the role on a part-time basis.

b) The Government should issue renewed guidance on part-time and flexible apprenticeships to clarify the position for employers.

5. There should be a renewed focus on the advice and support given to apprentices before, during and after their apprenticeship

a) Employers of all sizes should be supported to offer taster days, work experience and mentors with a specific focus on encouraging gender diversity.

b) Providers of information, advice and guidance should be trained and encouraged to deliver advice that challenges gender stereotypes.

c) The National Careers Service should be widely publicised to ensure access to ongoing careers advice for women of all ages.

d) Young women working as apprentices in male-dominated sectors should be given access to mentors and additional support.

Young Women's Trust hopes these recommendations will find widespread support. If they are taken forward they will transform the experience of apprenticeships for young women. They will bring huge benefits to employers and the wider economy and ensure the Government is able to make progress on its plans.

Over the coming year Young Women's Trust will be engaging with employers and working together to find ways of implementing these recommendations with a progress report next spring.

For the full report visit **www.youngwomenstrust.org**

7-8 Newbury Street, London EC1A 7HU t: 020 7600 7451 e: info@youngwomenstrust.org
www.youngwomenstrust.org @ywtrust www.facebook.com/youngwomenstrust

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