LSC South East

Third Sector Engagement with the Apprenticeship Programme

August 2009
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Executive summary

1 This report and accompanying case studies summarise research conducted by CFE on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) South East. The research sought to identify the key operational principles of good practice and any barriers faced when promoting Apprenticeships to Third Sector employers. This research will inform the development of a LSC regional strategy to engage the sector in the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).

Context

2 This research responds to the need for a greater understanding of the nature and extent of the Third Sector’s engagement with Apprenticeships in the South East region. It also examines the nature of existing Third Sector Apprenticeship models in other LSC regions to identify best practice. This research will inform the LSC regional strategy developed to engage the Third Sector in the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). The NAS was launched in April 2009, and provides end-to-end accountability for Apprenticeships. Their services include: Employer Services, Learner Services and an online Vacancy Matching Service (VMS). The NAS has national and regional teams covering each of these services. The NAS will focus on employer-led Apprenticeships; they plan to review the programme-led Apprenticeship strategy in order to make recommendations to ministers.

Conclusions and recommendations: Key messages

- **Skills-Third Sector** should lead on considering if a specific Third Sector Apprenticeship framework is needed and if it should include: fundraising, campaigning and managing volunteers. **Skills-Third Sector** has made good early progress and a number of organisations are looking forward to working with them. **Skills-Third Sector** is appropriately positioned to scope a Third Sector Apprenticeship framework given their responsibility for the development of: National Occupational Standards, Apprenticeship frameworks and Sector Qualification Strategies for the sector.

- A priority for the NAS must be to increase demand for Apprenticeships amongst Third Sector employers in the South East region. Only 4.5 per cent (estimated to be 631 organisations) of Third Sector employers in the South East engaged with Apprenticeships in the last twelve months, which was lower than the national average of 4.7 per cent. This shows that there are a large percentage of Third Sector organisations who aren’t currently offering Apprenticeships to their employees who could maybe benefit from this training. There are a number of barriers to engagement with Apprenticeships which need to be addressed, and communicating the relevance of Apprenticeships to Employers in the South East will be essential.

- The development of a Third Sector specific Apprenticeship framework should be built upon existing Apprenticeship frameworks most commonly used by Third Sector employers. At present there are no specific Third Sector frameworks; however, the sector utilises existing frameworks that have been developed by Sector Skills.

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1 Using NESS definition of ‘charity/voluntary sector’
Councils. In our research Business Administration, Creative, Hospitality and Youth Work were found to be the most frequently used frameworks by Third Sector employers; however, these were not suitable for all employees in the Third Sector but elements of these frameworks could be utilised.

- **The NAS and Skills-Third Sector should create greater flexibility in Apprenticeship frameworks; considering how Third Sector in-house provision could be given Apprenticeship status.** There is clear evidence of demand for Apprenticeship style training in the Third Sector, however most current provision does not entirely meet Third Sector employer’s needs. Third Sector employers who offer in-house apprenticeship style training include: Beatbullying, Jamie Oliver’s restaurant Fifteen and The Parks Trust. Many Third Sector employers preferred informal apprenticeship style provision, as it enabled them to: design their own specific training, train who they wanted and to be flexible around their own working conditions.

- **The NAS must consider how it can support and add value to existing Third Sector brokerage arrangements.** Existing brokerage arrangements include: National Apprenticeships Service (NAS), Integrated Brokerage, Sector Skills Councils, Third Sector Learning Consortia, Consortia+ and the Third Sector National Learning Alliance. Brokerage and support services offered by the Third Sector currently work well to meet Third Sector employers’ needs. NAS needs to fully understand the role played by these brokerage arrangements; it needs to identify and build links with those currently in operation and to assist them where there are currently gaps.

- **The NAS should fully understand the barriers which are facing Third Sector organisations and where possible assist in overcoming these.** The Third Sector’s awareness of Apprenticeships should be increased to show how Apprenticeships could be relevant to them. Apprenticeships should be targeted at new recruits due to a high percentage of the existing workforce being qualified. Other barriers which need to be addressed include: the size and capacity of organisations to engage with Apprenticeships, the organisation’s financial situation, preference for in-house training and the lack of suitable Apprenticeship frameworks.

- **The examples of good practice outlined in the case studies could be utilised by Third Sector employers to demonstrate ways of engaging with Apprenticeships, it can also be utilised by the NAS to show how employer’s needs could be better met.** Examples of specific good practice include: the expansion of Third Sector specific Apprenticeship provision, recruiting apprentices in line with the organisation’s charitable remit, offering intense support to apprentices, working with disadvantaged young people, and providing additional investment to ease apprentice recruitment and to aid retention.

- **The Third Sector should collaborate to establish an Apprenticeship Training Agency; building on innovative experience within the sector of Apprenticeship delivery and employer engagement.** Further consultation on appropriate delivery models for Third Sector Apprenticeships should be facilitated by the Third Sector National Learning Alliance. Such a model could be based on key characteristics of consortia demonstrated by the South London Learning Consortia or ViSTA. Current delivery models in the Third Sector reflect aspects of Group Training Associations and Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs), which have employer engagement as an integral feature. Further exploration of the potential for an outside agent to manage Third Sector Apprenticeships, such as in the ATAs model and, consultation with the Third Sector on the appropriateness of such models is advised.
1 Introduction

1.1 CFE was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) South East, to identify the key operational principles of good practice in delivering Apprenticeships to Third Sector employees. This research also identifies the barriers faced when promoting Apprenticeships to the Third Sector. This report summarises the findings from the literature review and primary research; case studies are presented in Appendix D. It also outlines conclusions and recommendations, which will inform the development of a South East regional strategy to engage the Third Sector in the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).

Project background

1.2 In 2004, the LSC developed a strategy (Working Together)\(^2\) that it intended to adopt with its partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The strategy had an implementation plan that explained the "ways of working" that the two bodies would adopt in order to achieve their shared aims. This strategy looked at the VCS as an employer, provider and a source of expertise. Since the publication of this report, public policy has become focused on the Third Sector, a term that includes the VCS but also embraces social enterprises, co-operatives, community interest groups and mutuals. The LSC has therefore adopted this terminology in its ongoing developmental work with the sector.

1.3 The LSC organised a conference in 2008; it was held in the South East to: ‘highlight the extensive contribution of the sector to economic prosperity and local communities’\(^3\). The event, entitled ‘Smart Skills – Smart Sector’ was organised by the LSC, RAISE, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), Slough Council for Voluntary Service and Surrey Community Action.

1.4 As the LSC continue to review the nature of their engagement with the Third Sector as: a provider, an employer and a gateway to priority learners; this research responds to the need for further evidence of the sector’s engagement with Apprenticeships in the South East region. Whilst taking national models of Apprenticeship engagement into account, this research focuses specifically upon the South East region, to inform the development of a LSC regional strategy.

1.5 The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) was launched in April 2009, led by newly appointed Chief Executive Simon Waugh. The NAS will provide end-to-end accountability for Apprenticeships, including services such as: Employer Services, Learner Services and an online Vacancy Matching Service (VMS). NAS has national and regional teams covering each of these services. The regional teams

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\(^3\) Third Sector: The merits of the Third Sector given priority at South East conference [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthEast/thirdsector/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthEast/thirdsector/)
have recently been recruited, and will have the responsibility to develop regional strategies for engaging with employers in strategic sectors, according to regional priorities and needs. NAS will work closely with colleges and training providers delivering Apprenticeships, as well as with key stakeholders including: the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), Connexions, local authorities, the Third Sector and with employers themselves. Finally, this research is set in the context of transition planning for other successive arrangements arising from the Machinery of Government changes.

**Background to Apprenticeships**

1.6 Since the re-development and re-branding of Modern Apprenticeships in 2004, many more students are able to access and study for internationally recognised vocational qualifications. In 1995 there were 26,000 Apprenticeship starts, according to The Draft Apprenticeships Bill; by 2007/08 this had risen to 224,800 starts. The Government’s aim, as set out in *World Class Skills* (2007), is to have 400,000 apprentices in England by 2020; with a target of one in five young people to be an apprentice in the next decade. Apprenticeships will become a key enabler in meeting the target to have all young people (until the age of 18) in education or training by 2015.

1.7 The completion of Apprenticeship frameworks has been historically low, with only 20 per cent of frameworks being completed in 2000; this has now risen to a completion rate of only 64 per cent in 2007/08; however, these success rates still need to improve. There is a 92 per cent completion rate for UK A-levels, and a 75 per cent completion rate for European Apprenticeships. The LSC recorded 48,400 Apprenticeship achievements in 2008/09 in England, with 7,300 achieved within the South East region.

1.8 Apprenticeships are a framework of qualifications which are designed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), in conjunction with employers, to meet the industries needs. Each framework has to meet the design principles of the Apprenticeship blueprint. The Apprenticeship blueprint also outlines expected commitments and responsibilities of the principal parties, including: apprentices, employers, government and SSCs.

1.9 There are two types of Apprenticeship programmes; these are employer-led and programme-led Apprenticeships. Employer-led Apprenticeships are those where the organisation recruits an employee to undertake an Apprenticeship due to there

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being a business need for a new employee. The individual will be employed with the company and will be released to undertake the qualifications with a learning provider. Programme-led Apprenticeships are those where an individual undertakes the initial qualifications related to an Apprenticeship with a learning provider; they will then either be found work experience, or a permanent job to enable them to complete the Apprenticeship framework.

**Method**

1.10 The research comprised of three key stages and involved: reviewing existing research; data and information; and conducting interviews with key stakeholders and Third Sector employers. Ten case studies based on Third Sector employers’ engagement with Apprenticeships are featured in Appendix D. The data, research and information collected has been analysed to examine differences and similarities in approaches and to outline best practice. This research will outline recommendations for future models and the future engagement of the Third Sector.

**Aims and objectives**

1.11 This research responds to the need for a greater understanding of the nature and extent of Third Sector Apprenticeship provision and employer engagement in the South East region. The nature of Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships in other LSC regions is also explored to identify best practice which will aid the development of a South East regional strategy. The research had the following objectives:

- To review the progress of the Third Sector Skills Body regarding the design and development of: the National Occupational Standards, the Apprenticeship frameworks and the Sector Qualification Strategies.
- To explore the nature of Third Sector Apprenticeship provision in the South East region.
- To examine the nature of existing Third Sector Apprentices in other English regions.
- To determine the type of frameworks required by Third Sector employers and the extent to which the Third Sector employment setting can adapt to meet the full requirements of these frameworks.
- To provide details of brokerage and support services offered by the VCS and other partnerships involving the apprentice and the learning provider.
- To identify barriers experienced by Third Sector employers offering Apprenticeships.
- To outline examples of good practice in Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships.
This report

1.12 This report is structured as follows: Section 1: Provides an introduction; Section 2: Sets out the methodology; Section 3: Presents an update on the progress of Skills-Third Sector; Section 4: Details Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships in the South East region; Section 5: Details Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships in other English regions; Section 6: Explores the types of Apprenticeship frameworks utilised in the Third Sector; Section 7: Presents details of the brokerage and support services used by the Third Sector; Section 8: Explores barriers to promoting Apprenticeships to the Third Sector; Section 9: Reveals examples of good practice in Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships and Section 10: Sets out the conclusions and recommended next steps.
2 Method

2.1 The research comprised of three key stages:

**Stage 1:** Desk research to review existing material, data and information.

**Stage 2:** Qualitative telephone interviews with key stakeholders and Third Sector organisations engaged with Apprenticeships.

**Stage 3:** Analysis of data collected examining differences and similarities in approaches, best practice and recommendations for future models.

Approach

2.2 The fieldwork was conducted between March and May 2009. Emphasis was upon qualitative evidence focusing on the nature of Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships and principles of good practice. The project scope included limited collection of quantitative primary data. The literature was collected through desk research and the case studies compiled through depth interviews with representatives of Third Sector organisations, apprentices, learning providers and brokers. The case studies themselves can be found in Appendix D. Stakeholder interviews were also carried out to: identify case study organisations, examine the progress of Skills- Third Sector, and to comment on general policy context.

Research questions

- What are the key operational principles and good practice that could underpin a model for Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships in the South East?
- What barriers do Third Sector organisations face in engaging with the Apprenticeship programme?
- What characterises the nature of Apprenticeships offered by Third Sector employers?
- What types of frameworks are required by Third Sector employers?
- What brokerage and support services are offered by Third Sector organisations and how effective are these?
- What is the nature and extent of Third Sector apprentices in the South East and in other English regions?

Scope and execution

2.3 The case study interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders including: training providers, brokers, Third Sector employers and apprentices. A total of 25 interviews were undertaken, (two to four per case study); these were selected to provide both a geographic spread and to demonstrate a range of approaches and
models. Stakeholder interviews were carried out with 16 people from a variety of organisations such as the LSC, NIACE, UK Workforce Hub and Enable. Please see Appendix A for a complete list of stakeholder consultees and Appendix B for a list of case study consultees.

Definitions

Third Sector

2.4 The Third Sector comprises organisations that are non-governmental and are ‘value-driven’. Such organisations are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental or cultural objectives rather than being profit driven. This definition includes: voluntary organisations, large and small charities, co-operatives, social enterprises, mutuals and community interest groups. This definition of the Third Sector has been adopted for the purposes of this research and is used throughout this report.

Apprenticeship

2.5 Apprenticeships are not a qualification in themselves but a framework containing a number of different qualifications, all of which must be achieved in order to complete the framework. An Apprenticeship must include the following elements, in line with the Apprenticeship framework blueprint:

- A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ): the competency-based element that demonstrates the ability to carry out a certain occupation. The NVQ is usually certified via a work-based assessment.

- A Technical Certificate7: the knowledge-based element that demonstrates theoretical knowledge underpinning a job in a certain occupation and industry.

- Functional Skills in numeracy, literacy and, in some frameworks, other personal skills.

- A module on employment rights and responsibilities, which is often taught as part of the Technical Certificate.

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7 A Technical Certificate does not always need to be studied, as long as technical knowledge is accredited through the competence element of an NVQ. LSC Apprenticeships programme features and benefits v2 (2008) http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/natapprenticeshiphandoutprogrammefeaturesandbenefitsmar09.pdf
3 Progress of **Skills-Third Sector**

3.1 This section will examine the remit of **Skills- Third Sector**; it will outline how it will operate and what progress it has made so far.

3.2 In October 2008 the Government announced plans to establish a new skills body for the Third Sector. Established in January 2009 this body is: **Skills-Third Sector**. This new body will identify and address skills gaps and shortages for: charities, voluntary groups, social enterprises and other Third Sector organisations. It will pull together the work of the SSCs to open up learning opportunities for the Third Sector’s paid and voluntary staff. It will also ensure the sector’s needs are properly considered in the design and development of: the National Occupational Standards, the Apprenticeship frameworks and the Sector Qualification Strategies.

3.3 This will be achieved through joint funding of £2.5 million over the next three years from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Office for the Third Sector. On behalf of the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, **Skills for Justice** (the SSC for Justice) is acting as an ‘incubator’ for **Skills-Third Sector** in its early days by providing: premises it can operate from and back office support.

3.4 The creation of **Skills-Third Sector** will put the Third Sector’s skills needs on the same level as other sectors and will provide opportunities for charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises to develop the skills and support they need.

3.5 As an independent body, **Skills-Third Sector** is directed by a board representing the sector’s employers. Jane Slowey has recently been appointed as the Chair of **Skills-Third Sector**, and will take over from Dame Mary Marsh who has acted as Interim Chair. Jane Slowey is Chief Executive of The Foyer Federation and has been an active contributor to the development of policy and practice for skills in Third Sector organisations.

3.6 **Skills-Third Sector** will aim to:

- be a powerful voice, working with and influencing SSCs in meeting the needs of the Third Sector organisations they cover;
- be an influential advocate in the national debate on skills;
- ensure that the national skills system addresses those cross-cutting needs unique to the Third Sector, like fundraising and campaigning;
- spread the word about skills development opportunities to Third Sector employers, in ways that are accessible and a part of their normal communication channels; and

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Skills – Third Sector, “Chair and Trustees of Board, Welcome” [www.focusonskills.co.uk](http://www.focusonskills.co.uk) (accessed 15th May 2009)
consider the skills needs of all of the Third Sector, including the voluntary sector, charities, community organisations and social enterprises.

3.7 *Skills-Third Sector* also aim to ensure ‘better and more robust Labour Market and Information and Intelligence (LMII)’\(^9\) is developed for the Third Sector through collaboration with SSCs. To this end, in March 2009 they announced a groundbreaking Third Sector Skills Survey to cover: vacancies, training, skills gaps and skills shortages. BMG Research are conducting the survey, which covers a sample of Third Sector organisations from all relevant areas in the UK, including both paid and voluntary staff. The fieldwork was conducted during March and April 2009; the data was collected through telephone interviews with individuals responsible for learning and development. Results from the Third Sector Skills Survey, and other current Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) collection exercises, will be accessible through an online toolkit, the LMI Matrix.

3.8 Concurrent to the formation of *Skills-Third Sector*; volunteers are now included in Third Sector organisations training needs analysis if their role directly contributes to meeting the objectives of the organisation. Therefore Train to Gain, the Governments flagship service, which aims to encourage all employers and employees to appreciate the value that learning and skills can bring, has become available to volunteers in the Third Sector from this year.

3.9 *Skills-Third Sector* will take over from the UK Workforce Hub and will take forward its work to ensure that the sector has a more skilled and effective workforce. There are therefore close links between *Skills-Third Sector* and the UK Workforce Hub, who were commissioned by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to develop a Sector Qualification Strategy for the UK Third Sector. This strategy builds on the Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) reports produced by the Hub\(^10\). Consultation on the draft Sector Qualification Strategy took place between December 2008 and March 2009, giving employees, employers and volunteers in the Third Sector to respond to the questions posed in this draft strategy. These views will be considered before the final sector qualification strategy is published.

3.10 Overall stakeholders felt that *Skills-Third Sector* were progressing well:

“I am delighted that *Skills-Third Sector* has made such encouraging early progress and very much welcome the announcement of Jane Slowey as its Chair. The Commission looks forward to working with *Skills-Third Sector* as it establishes the powerful linkages needed between Third Sector organisations, the network of Sector Skills Councils and the wider skills system. *Skills-Third Sector* provides an opportunity to “grasp the nettle” and make a real difference to the skills of all those who work in the Third Sector”.

(Chris Humphries, UK Commission for Employment and Skills)

3.11 This section shows that *Skills-Third Sector* has made good early progress, they are now established, have appointed their Chair, and have a clear set of aims and

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\(^9\) About *Skills-Third Sector* [www.focusonskills.co.uk](http://www.focusonskills.co.uk) (accessed 15th May 2009)

objectives. Those stakeholders consulted as part of this research are looking forward to working with them to make positive changes for the Third Sector.
4 Third Sector Apprenticeships: South East

4.1 This section will focus on the South East of England; it will outline the number of Third Sector Organisations and employees in the region. It will examine the number of Third Sector organisations that engage with Apprenticeships and the numbers of 16-24 year-olds undertaking these. This section will finally outline employer motivations and barriers to providing Apprenticeships.

South East Third Sector workforce

4.2 The Labour Force Survey (LFS)\(^\text{11}\) estimated that in 2005 there were 518,000 charity/voluntary sector employees in England. The South East was estimated to have 100,000 voluntary sector employees (see Figure 1); making it the region with the highest proportion (19%) of all voluntary sector employees in England.

\[\text{Figure 1: Source, UK workforce hub: Labour Force Survey (2005).}\]

4.3 The National Employers Skills Survey (NESS 2007) estimates there are 14,047 charity/voluntary sector organisations in the South East. NESS (2007) has a higher estimate (256,236) for the number of Third Sector employees in the South East compared to the LFS (2005) total of 100,000. The proportion of Third Sector employees, from the South East was estimated to be high (as with the LFS) by NESS (2007) at 18 per cent of the total estimated number of employees in England (1,424,337).

4.4 These differences in the number of employees are based on the estimation methodologies used by the surveys. The NESS use estimates based on weighted results because their sample size is lower than that of the LFS. Therefore the NESS weighted estimates could be less reliable than that of the Labour Force Survey so results should be treated with caution. However, NESS survey goes into greater detail about the nature of existing Apprenticeship provision in the Third Sector (which no other survey does), so these survey results will be used in the following sections of this chapter exclusively.

South East Third Sector employer engagement with Apprenticeships

4.5 Out of the estimated 14,047 Third Sector organisations (NESS 2007), 4.5 per cent (631) had staff who had ‘undertaken an Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship over the last 12 months’. This was just below the national average of 4.7 per cent. NESS (2007) asks employers to focus on those ‘Apprenticeships for which they or a training provider working on their behalf had received government funding’.

4.6 The NESS (2007) does not record for the total numbers of all staff who have undertaken an Apprenticeship in the last 12 months, so the total number of employees undertaking Apprenticeships in the Third Sector is unknown. The data does however estimate the total number of those aged 16-18, and 16-24, recruited to undertake an Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeships in the last 12 months. There were an estimated 848 Third Sector apprentices aged 16-24 in the South East, with 456 being aged 16-18.

Motivations for and against Apprenticeships

4.7 There were a number of reasons as to why employers offered Apprenticeships as can be seen in Figure 2 overleaf (employers were able to pick more than one reason therefore the totals will not equal 100 per cent). The NESS (2007) found that the main reason Third Sector employers have apprentices was so they were ‘training the workforce of the future’ (32%); followed by ‘we can train them in our way of doing things’ (25%). This shows that some employers believe that training their own staff is important, and may consider offering further Apprenticeships in the future.

4.8 Having previously undertaken an Apprenticeship or ‘got an opportunity’ motivated 19 per cent of Third Sector employers to hire an apprentice.
Figure 2: Source, National Employers Skills Survey (2007).

4.9 Whilst it is important to understand current employer’s motivations for offering Apprenticeships, examining the barriers will be more useful when designing a strategy to increase Apprenticeship engagement. The Government has a target of 400,000 Apprenticeships in England by 2020\(^2\); therefore an understanding of the Third Sector and the reasons why it chooses not to hire apprentices is essential. The percentage of Third Sector organisations that had staff undertaking an Apprenticeship in the South East (4.5%) was lower than engagement across all sectors in the South East (standing at 7.1%).

4.10 There were a number of reasons outlined by Third Sector employers as to why they did not engage with Apprenticeships (see Figure 3). The main reason that Third Sector employers cited for not employing apprentices was that they were ‘not relevant/applicable to our business/don’t need them/not necessary’ (20.6%). Although for some employers Apprenticeships may not be relevant (maybe due to their size or other reasons), there may be some Third Sector organisations who think they aren’t relevant due to other, specific reasons such as: their lack of knowledge or understanding of Apprenticeships; or what they can offer to an organisation. Sixteen per cent of organisations also stated that they ‘don’t know/or [have] no particular reason’ for not engaging with Apprenticeships; further demonstrating that many employers may not be facing specific barriers to providing them.

4.11 Fifteen percent of the organisations stated that ‘all staff [are] fully trained’, therefore these employers again did not have any specific barriers to employing Apprenticeships; we could conclude that they may consider them if the need arose for new staff to be trained.

![Cited reasons for not employing an apprentice](image)

Summary

4.12 There are a large estimated number of Third Sector employers, and employees in the South East region. Out of those surveyed by NESS only 4.5 per cent of Third Sector organisations had staff who had undertaken an Apprenticeship in the last 12
months. Of those aged 16-24, 848 young people were estimated to have undertaken an Apprenticeship in the Third Sector.

4.13 This chapter has outlined the various motivations and barriers to employers offering Apprenticeships, and these must be fully understood to enable the demand for Apprenticeships to be increased. Chapter 9 will outline the barriers to Third Sector employers in more detail, incorporating past research and the interviews we conducted with Third Sector organisations.
5 Third Sector Apprenticeships in all LSC regions

5.1 This section will examine the Third Sector’s workforce nationally. It will then go on to look at the percentage of organisations that are currently engaging with Apprenticeships and their motivations for doing so. It will also look at the reasons why employers decided not to offer Apprenticeships.

Third Sector workforce

5.2 As outlined in the previous chapter, the Labour Force Survey (2005)\(^{13}\) survey estimated there to be 518,000 charity/voluntary sector employees in England. The NESS (2007) survey makes a much higher estimate of 1,424,337 Third Sector employees and estimates there to be 86,739 Third Sector organisations in England. Although these estimates vary considerably it can be seen that there are a large number of Third Sector employees in England for whom Apprenticeships may be appropriate.

Third Sector employer engagement with Apprenticeships

5.3 The NESS (2007) reveals that on average 4.7 per cent of Third Sector organisations nationally had staff who had undertaken an Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship in the last 12 months. Figure 4 overleaf shows the proportion of Third Sector organisations engaged with Apprenticeships in each English region. As outlined in the previous chapter, only 4.5 percent of Third Sector organisations in the South East were estimated to have staff who had undertaken an Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship in the last 12 months. As can be seen in Figure 4 there are a number of regions who appear to be more engaged with Apprenticeships, especially in the West Midlands where 7.3 per cent of Third Sector organisations had staff undertaking an Apprenticeship in the last 12 months.

5.4 NESS 2007 estimate that a total of 4,081 Third Sector organisations nationally have offered Apprenticeships in the last 12 months. Based on the weights assigned in the survey, the share of this engagement across the regions is shown in Table 1 below. Although the South East have only 4.5 per cent of Third Sector organisations offering Apprenticeships; the estimated number of Third Sector organisations who have offered an Apprenticeship is 631, representing 15 per cent of all organisations who offered Apprenticeships nationally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humber</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4081</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1 Source, National Employers Skills Survey (2007).*

5.5 The NESS (2007) also estimates the number of 16-24 year-olds who have undertaken an Apprenticeship with a Third Sector organisation in the last 12
months. Figure 5 below show these estimated numbers by region. Out of an estimated total of 8,493 the South East only had 848 apprentices which was much lower than other regions such as the North West and Greater London. This shows that the Third Sector in the South East should target a greater number of young people to undertake Apprenticeships as this has been successful in other regions.

![Estimated number of 16-24 year-old apprentices employed by Third Sector organisations](image)

**Figure 5: Source, National Employers Skills Survey 2007.**

**Motivations and barriers**

5.6 Third Sector employers chose to employ an Apprenticeship for varied reasons as can be seen in Figure 6. Overall these choices reflect those of the Third Sector organisations in the South East (as outlined in the previous chapter).

5.7 The main reason for 29 per cent of Third Sector employers offering an Apprenticeship was ‘training the workforce of the future’ (also the main reason in the South East). The second most common motivation for offering Apprenticeships (also the second main reason in the South East) was so ‘we can train them in our way of doing things’ (28.5%).

5.8 When compared to the South East, national employers were motivated less to offer an Apprenticeship because it was the way they were trained or ‘got an opportunity’ with only 12 per cent stating this reason; compared to 19 percent in the South East. Seventeen per cent of organisations nationally reported that they used Apprenticeships due to skills shortages amongst their staff, and staff they were trying to recruit, compared to 11 per cent of those in the South East.
Cited reasons for employing an apprentice
(% of employees choosing each reason in England)

- Training the workforce of the future: 29.2%
- We can train them in our way of doing things: 28.5%
- Because we find it difficult to recruit staff with the skills we need / existing staff lack skills / have outdated skills: 17.1%
- Other: 13.6%
- It’s the way I trained / got an opportunity: 12.1%
- Helpful in recruiting staff / makes us more attractive to potential recruits: 12.0%
- Need young workers in an ageing workforce: 8.0%
- To give young people a start: 6.9%
- Don’t know/no particular reasons: 6.5%
- I get funding if I offer them: 4.6%
- It is the best way to learn: 3.3%
- Gives us free / cheap trial of staff: 3.1%
- It is mutually beneficial to both us and the apprentice: 0.5%

Figure 6: Source, National Employers Skills Survey 2007.

5.9 Figure 7 shows the percentage of employers stating each reason for not having Apprenticeships. These again overall mirrored the reasons given by Third Sector organisations in the South East.
Figure 7: Source, National Employers and Skills Survey 2007.
5.10 The Employer’s main reason for not having apprentices was because it is ‘not relevant/applicable to our business/don’t need them/not necessary’ (20.1% compared to 20.6% in the South East). As with the South East the second most common reason was ‘don’t know/no particular reason’ (14.3%, 16.1% for the South East).

5.11 Employers in England also chose not to have apprentices as ‘all staff (are) fully trained’ (11.6%) which was lower than the South East (15%); or because they don’t require staff to be fully trained (11.4%).

Summary

5.12 There are a multitude of barriers or reasons as to why Third Sector employers do offer Apprenticeships. To encourage the wider take up of Apprenticeships some of these barriers/reasons need to be addressed.

5.13 The situation in the South East is not unique, as has been shown through the survey results from NESS (2007). The same barriers face those Third Sector organisations in the South East as in the rest of England. Good practice from across the English regions therefore can be built upon to create a regional strategy (as shown in Chapter 10).
6 Apprenticeship frameworks; relevance to the Third Sector

6.1 In this chapter we present details of the types of Apprenticeship frameworks available to, and used by, Third Sector employers.

Frameworks available

6.2 There are currently over 180 different Apprenticeship frameworks available across 80 industry sectors, which can be used by any employers (including the Third Sector). At present there are no specific Third Sector frameworks; however, the sector is able to utilise existing frameworks that have been developed by other SSCs.

Frameworks used by the Third Sector

6.3 From our research with Third Sector organisations we found that Business Administration was the most frequently used framework by these Third Sector employers. Seven of the ten case studies employed at least one Business Administration apprentice, with three employing only Business Administration apprentices. Overall there were 16 apprentices undertaking Business Administration (see Figure 8).

6.4 The UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac 2007 indicates that 43 per cent of voluntary sector workers work in ‘associate, professional and technical’ or ‘managerial and senior official’ occupations\(^{14}\) explaining the need for Business Administration Apprenticeship frameworks amongst Third Sector employers.

6.5 National Apprenticeship statistics (Data service 2009)\(^{15}\) indicate that in 2008/09, Business Administration was the third most popular Apprenticeship framework across England, accounting for 8 per cent of all Apprenticeship starts that year; showing that this is not unique to the Third Sector.


Other frameworks used by the Third Sector can be seen in Figure 8 and include: Creative Apprenticeship, Hospitality and Youth Work. In particular the Youth Work Apprenticeship is highly relevant to the Third Sector for those employers providing youth outreach and engagement. The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services has indicated that Youth Work vacancies, including those for Youth Work Apprenticeships, are some of the hardest to fill. Reasons given include:

- Many voluntary and community youth sectors are only able to provide short-term contracts to employees.
- A lack of funding for training and development.
- A lack of flexible entry routes to qualifications.

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6.7 In the academic year 07/08\textsuperscript{17} there were 7,874 Apprenticeship starts by Third Sector employees, this has risen slightly from 05/06 where there were 7,748 Apprenticeship starts. Within the academic year 07/08, 4090 apprentices completed their full Apprenticeship framework. These success rates have risen over the last two years; in 05/06 only 3597 completed their framework. Of those who started Apprenticeships in 07/08 in the Third Sector, 4,855 of these were under the age of 19, with the remaining 3,019 being 19 or over. In 07/08 there were 1,920 Apprenticeships started under the Child Development and Well Being subject area in the Third Sector, there were 1,409 in Administration, 1,068 in Health and Social Care and 548 in Retailing and Wholesaling. There were many other subject areas being studied by employees of the Third Sector including: ICT; Hospitality and Catering; and Engineering, showing the variety of Apprenticeships that are utilised by the Third Sector employees.

\textit{Availability of provision}

6.8 A lack of suitable frameworks has been cited as a common reason why many Third Sector organisations do not engage with the Apprenticeship programme. Provision of Apprenticeship frameworks such as Business Administration is more widely available across England than for more specialised Apprenticeship frameworks that are only offered by certain training providers. The Third Sector is reliant upon providers when deciding which frameworks to use. As outlined below training providers often offer the most common Apprenticeships they know they will get the most numbers for:

“If you are a provider you don’t do the complicated stuff if you can help it. You do the easy stuff and look at if you can put a large number of people onto an easy framework and get x amount of profit without much effort”

(Regional Manager, East Midlands and East of England, Lifelong Learning UK)

6.9 In 2007 ViSTA, a voluntary sector training association in Somerset recognised that Youth Work Apprenticeships were essential for the Third Sector. Working with Somerset County Council, ViSTA consulted with a cohort of employers to establish a demand for the Youth Work framework, and developed a way for it to be delivered in the county. Apprentices employed on the Youth Work Apprenticeships accounted for 27\% of all apprentices employed in the Third Sector in Somerset, in 2008\textsuperscript{18}. The Youth Work framework was the second most popular framework among ViSTA’s 17 employers, indicating that the framework is highly relevant to the sector. Since then, all of these apprentices went on to secure employment in Youth Work.

6.10 ViSTA overcame a major challenge, ensuring that the Youth Work Apprenticeship was available in the county. However Lifelong Learning UK recognise that Youth Work Apprenticeships are not appropriate for all Third Sector employers to offer to all of their employees:

\textsuperscript{17} Source: Apprenticeships starts and framework completions by Third Sector, The Data Service (LSC administrative data) 2009

\textsuperscript{18} National Employer Skills Survey data, 2007
“There are times when we recommend to people – if you have never done an apprenticeship before, don’t start with a Youth Work Apprenticeship. It has these unusual elements that more traditional apprenticeships like business admin don’t. Working with office-based apprenticeship models first; lets employers get a feel for it. Then they can move on to something more complicated at a later stage.”

(Regional Manager, East Midlands and East of England, Lifelong Learning UK)

6.11 The Youth Work Apprenticeship framework is managed by Lifelong Learning UK. Across all sectors, there have been difficulties in uptake and completion of this framework, particularly for employers who have not engaged with Apprenticeships previously. Within the Third Sector, the Youth Work framework is popular to progress individuals to the role of Youth Support Workers. Currently, the framework is restricted to young people aged 16-18; there are limited opportunities for those aged 19-25, and none available for those aged 25 and over. From 2010 Youth Work will become a graduate only profession.

Summary

6.12 Secondary analysis, consultation with stakeholders and Third Sector employers, suggests that Business Administration and Youth Work Apprenticeship frameworks are the most relevant to the sector. Business Administration is one of the most popular frameworks across all sectors, suggesting that this is a core function for many organisations, irrespective of the sector they work within.
7 Apprenticeship frameworks: meeting Third Sector employers needs

7.1 In this section we consider the extent to which Third Sector organisations have met the requirements of existing Apprenticeship frameworks, and alternative ways in which they train their staff. It also addresses ways in which Third sectors employer’s needs could be further met.

Converting in-house training to formal Apprenticeships

7.2 When the Sector Skills Council - Creative and Cultural Skills (CCSkills) established a Creative Apprenticeship, The Sage Gateshead worked closely with the Learning and Skills Council to ensure the framework was right for Creative and Cultural industries. The Sage Gateshead formerly offered informal style Apprenticeships. They wanted a workforce who could lead music education and participation, that reflected the communities that live in the North East of England. Through Arts Council funding, they were able to employ young people to do just that, but there were no any relevant Apprenticeship frameworks which employees could take part in.

7.3 This drove them to engage with CCSkills to drive forward this framework and to develop a consortium necessary for the first year pilot of the Apprenticeship.

“When Creative and Cultural Skills; the Cultural and Creative Sector Skills body became licensed, they had decided that one of their first priorities was to create a full Apprenticeship framework for the creative and cultural sector. Tom Bewick, then chairperson, was visiting the North East, he was visiting the Cultural Sector Development Initiative project, and he asked if he could find out more about The Sage Gateshead informal Apprenticeship scheme. So basically we shared all of the knowledge and information we had, statistics, anecdotal evidence, with them and they asked me to sit on their creative apprenticeship task force”

(Wendy Smith, Learning and Development Officer at The Sage Gateshead).

7.4 The informal training which The Sage Gateshead was providing was utilised as part of the new Apprenticeship framework, along with their experience and expertise.

Delivering Apprenticeships in-house

7.5 Some Third Sector organisations are able to provide the training element of an Apprenticeship themselves, due to them already being a training provider offering Apprenticeships to other organisations. Rathbone and Catch 22 have been motivated to employ their own apprentices. Their costs are reduced (when
compared to other Third Sector organisations) as they are able to provide the training themselves, and apprentices are able to be on-site five days a week.

Accessing Apprenticeship frameworks

7.6 Other Third Sector employers have attempted to offer formal Apprenticeships and have reverted back to offering informal Apprenticeship style training instead due to the availability of providers in the area to provide the framework. An example of this is the Parks Trust, which ran an Apprenticeship programme from 2006 until 2008; they had seven apprentices studying Construction, Horticulture and Animal Care. The unique nature of these Apprenticeships meant there were no colleges in Milton Keynes that could offer the training. The nearest college was around 20 miles away which led to low attendance rates. The Parks Trust final evaluation, in 2008, concluded that “The apprentices highlighted difficulties with location, feeling outsiders and not part of the course, not necessarily seeing the relevance of written work and not feeling supported by tutors”\(^\text{19}\).

7.7 Parks Trust has now (temporarily) reverted back to offering their own in-house training provision. They offer young people employment and a six month training programme, which acts as a trial period to assess their suitability for their job. Parks Trust is currently working with a local college to offer relevant Apprenticeship frameworks in: Amenity Horticulture, Landscape Gardening and Production Horticulture, which the training provider does not currently offer. It is hoped that those who have undertaken the six months training programme, if suitable, will go on to study one of these frameworks in the future.

Meeting employer’s needs: preference for informal apprenticeships

7.8 The demand for Apprenticeships is high in the Third Sector. From the stakeholder interviews with Third Sector organisations (across England), we have identified a number of organisations that offer informal apprenticeship style training. In these cases, apprentices are working under an Apprenticeship model that is designed by the employer, but is not in line with the Apprenticeship blueprint. These employers offer informal apprenticeships because they feel there are no relevant frameworks for the work they do; and/or they prefer a less bureaucratic approach to securing funding and accreditation.

7.9 Anderson and Metcalf (2001)\(^\text{20}\) found that many organisations prefer to design their own in-house training and therefore do not engage with accredited training programmes such as Apprenticeships. To encourage organisations that have the resources and experience of training apprentices to engage with the Apprenticeship programme, a degree of flexibility around the structure of the framework may be required. Research shows (as outlined in Chapter 9) that limited capacity to manage Apprenticeships can deter small Third Sector organisations from engaging with Apprenticeships:

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\(^{19}\) The Parks Trust final evaluation part 2.

“Had we got the luxury of a human resources department or someone who we could delegate to, Apprenticeships would be a nice stage in our development”

(Manager, Slough Crossroads, an SME Third Sector Organisation).

7.10 Clark (2007) found that over two-thirds of small and medium-sized voluntary sector organisations do not have a dedicated Human Resources specialist. This barrier to Apprenticeship engagement could be remedied by offering greater support to Third Sector organisations struggling with their internal capacity, and by developing Apprenticeship models where the burden of bureaucracy is managed by an outside agent.

**Supporting employers when frameworks are modified**

7.11 Youth Work is a relevant Apprenticeship framework for the Third Sector as outlined in Chapter 6. Across all sectors there have been difficulties in the uptake and completion of this framework, particularly for employers who have not engaged in the Apprenticeship programme previously. The framework itself is seen to be complex due to the number of modules taken by the young person, especially the key skills modules which were seen to be repetitive. Further problems were that apprentices did not have the academic skills suitable for starting the Apprenticeship. As of the 1st May 2009, the framework has been modified, reducing the number of compulsory key skills modules from six to two, and removing the health and safety element from Youth Work Advanced Apprenticeships. In September 2009 there will be a further review of the framework. These changes could cause confusion for employers, and so efforts will need to be made to ensure they understand the implications of the modified framework. Work will need to be undertaken to ensure that employers understand the implications of the new framework, which could potentially simplify the arrangements.

**Ensuring there are clear career paths for apprentices**

7.12 From 2010, to become a professionally qualified youth worker apprentices need to undertake additional training to degree level. Existing employees will continue to maintain professional status within the sector, while new employees including apprentices will need to be qualified to Level 4. Apprentices will be able to access the sector at entry level through a number of roles such as: assistant youth support worker and youth support worker; however they will need to up-skill to graduate level to progress within that career. What is currently unclear is the route of progression for apprentices, particularly in the Youth Work industry. On the 5th May 2008, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill had its third reading.

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22 From 2010 the Youth Work section will become a graduate only profession. Professional Youth Workers will need to be accredited through a Joint Negotiating Committee accredited Level 4 qualification.

23 National Council For Voluntary Youth Services, “Qualifications in youth work”
in the House of Commons; it is still unclear what the route to higher education is for apprentices. There is currently confusion as to whether Advanced Apprenticeships are a certified route to Higher Education, with not all institutions recognising them. This problem is acutely relevant for apprentices who are undertaking Youth Work Apprenticeships, given that from 2010 the role of Professional Youth Worker will require a Level 4 qualification (degree or equivalent). Apprentices will hit a “glass ceiling” unless they undertake an additional element of training at some stage. This could have two possible effects on employers:

- Apprentices will become motivated to go on to higher education, providing a high skills base for the Youth Work profession and Third Sector; or

- Employers will be deterred from hiring apprentices in Youth Work, limiting the vocational skills base of the Youth Work profession and the Third Sector.

Need for a Third Sector specific Apprenticeship framework

7.13 Our research suggests there are mixed views on the need for a specific Third Sector Apprenticeship framework, with some organisations feeling strongly about this:

‘When the Office of the Third Sector outlined its action plan to see us through the recession; it should have included a framework for an Apprenticeship programme specific to the Third Sector’

(Emma-Jane Cross, Chief Executive, Beat Bullying).

7.14 There was consensus amongst those consulted that any Third Sector framework should be developed as an Advanced Apprenticeship and should cover: fundraising, campaigning and managing volunteers. The 2007 Voluntary Sector Skills Survey reinforces the need to strengthen these skill areas, with fundraising in particular being highlighted as a skills gap by 25 per cent of employers.

7.15 The need to promote longer term workforce development as a solution to the sector’s skills gaps was also encouraged. The Voluntary Sector Skills Survey found that eight per cent of Third Sector employers cited Youth Work as a hard to fill vacancy along with Social Care (8%) and Health Care (7%)24. Where possible, the Youth Work Apprenticeship framework would be preferred, however in some cases a sector specific framework would overcome many of the common barriers that organisations face when they are recruiting. For micro organisations, employees are required to undertake a multitude of job roles. Therefore, an Apprenticeship framework that incorporates additional skills that are essential to the sector, such as fundraising, would motivate employers to engage.

7.16 The Creative Apprenticeship is an excellent example of how a sector specific Apprenticeship framework has been established. The Sector Skills Council, Creative and Cultural Skills, and the LSC worked closely with employers, such as The Sage Gateshead, to ensure that the framework met their needs. Ensuring that

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employers inputted into the framework, meant that they were willing to take ownership of it in its pilot stage 2008/09. The LSC have funded the training aspect of the Apprenticeship, and employers have noted that their close involvement in its development has been a key motivation for supporting the pilot phase.

Summary

7.17 In conclusion, stakeholder and Third Sector employer opinion suggests that a specific Third Sector Apprenticeship framework is worthy of consideration. Good practice from the Creative Apprenticeship, such as close consultation with employers through the relevant Sector Skills Council, could be drawn upon when developing this framework. Further support maybe needed for Third Sector organisations if frameworks are changed, and to ensure they successfully engage with Apprenticeships.
8 Brokerage and support services offered to the Third Sector

8.1 There are a range of Apprenticeship brokerage models and support available to employers which are outlined below. Some, such as the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), are available to all employers across all sectors whereas other more specialised and restricted support has been developed by the Third Sector itself in response to local employer needs.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

8.2 Following the launch of the National Apprenticeship Service in April 2009, regional NAS Employer Services (known as the field-force) will offer support to employers accessing Apprenticeships. NAS provides end to end support for those undertaking Apprenticeships, including responding to employers who have expressed an interest in offering an Apprenticeship. This support allows employers to identify and address barriers, and to identify training providers to deliver the Apprenticeship training they need. By providing this support, NAS aims to:

- Increase the awareness of the benefits of Apprenticeships and therefore improve their overall profile; and
- Increase the number of Apprenticeships nationally.\(^\text{25}\)

8.3 Currently, employer enquiries are routed to the regional field-force through the NAS’s national brokerage system; they are then picked up by members of the regional Employer Services Team. The employer enquiry may be referred to other support services depending on the employer’s size as outlined in Table 2 below, there are variations in these guidelines, are agreed upon in each region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer size</th>
<th>Engagement type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5000 plus employees</td>
<td>National Employer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 – 4999 employees</td>
<td>National Apprenticeship Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249 or less employees</td>
<td>Business Link</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Where employer enquiries are routed to

8.4 In conjunction with the launch of NAS there was a launch of the new online vacancy matching system for Apprenticeships. The new online vacancy matching system provides an area where employers can advertise their Apprenticeship vacancies and where young people and adults looking for vacancies can find Apprenticeship opportunities. The web-based system will be used by candidates, employers and training providers to facilitate and streamline the process of linking apprentices with employers in an efficient, effective and user friendly way. The online system can be accessed at: www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

Integrated brokerage

8.5 Information and brokerage for Apprenticeships is also provided via the Train to Gain skills broker service, which, as of April 2009, is delivered by Business Link. Free simplified information and advice is available to employers to assist employers to grow their business and enhance the skills of their workforce. Employers can contact a local skills broker who will be able to identify where a skills need could be met either by an Apprenticeship or other provision. The broker will direct them to suitable local training and will provide information on how to access funding. Apprenticeships will continue to be a part of the Train to Gain offer, and Business Link will work closely with NAS in the regions to share information and provide appropriate support to employers.

Sector Skills Council (SSC) support

8.6 Another support system for employers, providers and apprentices are sector specific intermediaries, such as those put in place through the Compact. A Compact allows flexibilities in Train to Gain funding for specific SSCs; these flexibilities include the: re-skilling or up-skilling of individuals who already have a qualification; and funding for marketing Train to Gain. The Compact is an agreement between the SSC, LSC and DIUS. Some SSCs such as ProSkills and SEMTA have advisors in each region, to offer expert advice to brokers and facilitate the development of new sector related provision.

8.7 Creative and Cultural Skills (SSC) have been working with a small number of employers to pilot Creative Apprenticeships, many of which are within the Third Sector including: The Sage Gateshead, UK Unsigned, National Trust, Primal Spark and Institute of Field Archaeologists. Through Creative Apprenticeships they have explored how a combination of paid work experience and studying for qualifications could work in the Creative Industries.

Third Sector Consortia

8.8 The LSC’s national strategy for engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) or Third Sector, Working Together26 (2004) identified a need for operational roles for the VCS in sub-regional consortia. The aim of these structures was to develop and enhance the VCS involvement with learning and skills.

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8.9 In addition to this, these consortia have acted as a conduit between LSC funding and a large range of small-scale VCS funders. This partnership facilitated the delivery of Government’s learning and skills targets to reach more excluded communities. Over time, consortia have been established in all regions to deliver a range of functions from information synthesis, to representation of the sector. We consider consortia throughout this research and recognise their importance in engaging small Third Sector organisations.

8.10 Currently, some Third Sector organisations are also developing support systems to facilitate access to Apprenticeships. These systems provide information, and they signpost employers to relevant Apprenticeship opportunities, on behalf of learning providers and employers. For example ViSTA offers an online service for learners to identify Apprenticeship opportunities across the South West.

8.11 The South London Learning Consortia also provide a range of services to their members and funders, within the learning and skills sector across London. Their Membership is drawn from VCS learning providers and other learning and skills delivery partnerships. South London Learning Consortia’s members represent the most disadvantaged groups in the region; therefore services need to be delivered in a holistic manner, providing a bespoke package of learning, skills and support. They work with the employer and employee to develop and design a delivery programme that recognises the day-to-day business needs of the employer, and is also a flexible and supportive learning programme for the employee. The training is delivered both in work, and at local community venues.

8.12 Enable, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Voluntary and Community Sector Learning and Skills Consortium, are a Third Sector Consortium based in the East Midlands. They allow micro organisations in the Third Sector to collectively tender for LSC learning and skills contracts. Enable then manage the administrative and performance management aspects of these contracts. In 2009 Enable secured ESF funding through the Learning and Skills Council to support 120 apprentices into employment in the East Midlands in Third Sector organisations. They have identified a preference among their employer base for in-house training, and so will train up their own NVQ assessors to support the training of apprentices in these organisations. The funding will also support the apprentices’ wages, introducing Third Sector employers to the Apprenticeship programme and allowing them to experience the benefits of employing apprentices first hand. This makes the process risk-free and will hopefully encourage employers to take on apprentices in the future:

“Our model is about organisations initially having an apprentice within their workforce, either a volunteer or a member of staff. It is then about looking at how voluntary organisations might be able to deliver an Apprenticeship programme themselves”
(Don Hayes, Chief Executive of Enable)

Consortia+

8.13 Consortia+ support the current Third Sector consortia through a national network of VCS learning consortia and other infrastructure organisations with a focus on learning and training, facilitated by NIACE. It also includes regional voluntary
sector networks, along with key national VCS bodies. Membership meetings are held on average quarterly, and provide opportunities for: networking; sharing good practice; receiving updates on key developments in relevant policy and practice from specialist speakers; and discussing issues of common interest.

8.14 The network has an email group that is managed by NIACE. This enables Consortia+ members to circulate information, questions and requests for help. The network enables members to share information, documents and case studies on pertinent topics such as Apprenticeships. Consortia+ has started to acquire a more strategic role, including advocacy and offering a collective response to key policy developments.

Third Sector National Learning Alliance

8.15 The Third Sector National Learning Alliance (TSNLA) is a new national alliance of voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises involved in learning and skills. It aims to provide a coherent national ‘voice’ from, and for, Third Sector providers across government departments and other important bodies, and a forum for developing Third Sector ideas and proposals. It should enable the Third Sector to input more effectively into influencing government policy on learning and skills.

8.16 Work on the TSNLA began in 2006 through a partnership between the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the UK Workforce Hub. They were soon joined by a group of VCS organisations acting as an informal Steering Group. Additional members are: National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), Foyer Federation, Learning Curve, Federation of Community Development Learning (FCDL), Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Forum, and Lancashire Learning Consortium.

Summary

8.17 This chapter has outlined the range of existing brokerage arrangements available to Third Sector organisations. These are: National Apprenticeships Service (NAS), Integrated Brokerage, Sector Skills Councils, Third Sector Learning Consortia, Consortia+ and the Third Sector National Learning Alliance. Brokerage and support services offered by the Third Sector consortia work well to meet Third Sector employers’ needs. The NAS must consider how it can support and add value to existing Third Sector brokerage arrangements. NAS needs to fully understand the role played by these brokerage arrangements; it needs to identify and build links with those currently in operation and to assist them where there are currently gaps.

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27NIACE, “VCS Learning Links: Consortia +”
9 Third Sector Apprenticeships: Barriers

9.1 In this section we present the main barriers faced by Third Sector employers in England engaging with Apprenticeships; they include those evidenced in recent research and literature (not all were Third Sector specific due to the limited information currently available on Third Sector Apprenticeships), and those identified through our own research. The chapter will explore some of these barriers, and will outline potential solutions where these have been identified through our case study research.

Evidencing barriers to employer engagement with Apprenticeships

9.2 The evidence from previous research shows that the barriers, or reasons as to why employers do not offer Apprenticeships are inconsistent; a number of studies (such as those by Gospel and Fuller 1998, and Sims et al 2000) have drawn attention to different reasons including: a lack of appropriate frameworks or knowledge of apprenticeships; bureaucracy; and a preference for in-house training. Although these findings may seem inconsistent, they primarily demonstrate that different employers face different barriers, and for some these may be numerous.

9.3 The NESS (2007) asked Third Sector employers who did not offer Apprenticeships their reasons for not doing so. There were a number of reasons given as to why, which were fully outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. This chapter will examine some of those barriers outlined by NESS (2007), for which there is additional evidence from previous research and the interviews conducted through our case study research.

Awareness and relevance of Apprenticeships

9.4 The awareness and relevance of Apprenticeships to Third Sector employers is a barrier to many employers. The NESS (2007) found that 20 per cent of Third Sector employers across England (as outlined in chapter 5) cited Apprenticeships as: ‘not relevant/applicable to our business/don’t need them/not necessary’ with a further five per cent stating that they ‘don’t know enough about them/what we’d have to do’. This shows that a number of employers may not be offering Apprenticeships due to a lack of knowledge about them, or because of a misunderstanding as to how they could be relevant to their organisation. The LSC’s strategy Working Together28 (2004) included a commitment to adopt better ways of communicating with Third Sector organisations to ensure they knew about developments in learning and skills policy (including Apprenticeships). However, research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in 2008 noted that more still needs to be done to publicise the benefits of Apprenticeships to Third Sector employers.

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Workforce already fully trained

9.5 The NESS (2007) found that 12 per cent of Third Sector employers did not offer Apprenticeships because ‘all staff [are] full trained’. However the remaining 88 per cent of employers did not state this and therefore could be in need of further training.

9.6 Compared to the private and public sector the Third Sector have a higher percentage of their employees (33%) who hold a degree or equivalent level qualification as can be seen in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest qualifications obtained by employees in each sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE A Level or Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE grades A-C or Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Qualification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Source: The UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006*

9.7 This evidence confirms that the Third Sector has a large number of qualified employees, but that Apprenticeships could be relevant to those who are less qualified within the Third Sector workforce.

9.8 In a number of the interviews we conducted with Third Sector organisations, Apprenticeships were deemed appropriate for their staff. Not only for learning the skills relevant to the job they were currently undertaking, but for up-skilling them to take on further tasks.

Size and capacity to engage

9.9 Findings from NESS (2007) found that six per cent of Third Sector organisations cited ‘our business is too small’ as a reason for not offering Apprenticeships. A ‘lack of resources/facilities’ was cited by three per cent of employers. A small percentage (0.2%) of employers also stated that there was ‘too much paperwork/bureaucracy/admin’.

9.10 The Cassels report; ‘Modern Apprenticeships: The way to work’ (2001) also found that bureaucracy and red tape were the strongest reasons for 54 per cent of employers (not specifically Third Sector) not taking on apprentices. However, the research found that this was reported less by those organisations with experience of having an apprentice, than those who had none (42% and 58% respectively).

9.11 Sims et al (2000) suggested that a multi-agency approach was required to encourage the take up of Apprenticeships; with further identification and
publication of business benefits for individual employers, by offering and organising appropriate support and by developing models where the burden of bureaucracy is managed by an outside agent.

9.12 The Sage Gateshead noted that whilst they have engaged with Apprenticeships it has been a lot of work and they have had to employ an extra member of staff to manage this: “We’ve done, that’s been a lot of work, it’s included a lot of my time and I’m in the senior management team at The Sage Gateshead. I’ve had to employ a manager two days a week to do this job.” (The Sage Gateshead.)

Lack of appropriate Apprenticeship frameworks

9.13 Throughout our research a lack of appropriate Apprenticeship frameworks was seen to be a barrier to engaging with Apprenticeships. The NESS (2007) found that five per cent of employers cited ‘no Apprenticeships available for our industry/sector/specialism’ as a barrier and a number of interviewees also cited this as a barrier.

9.14 BeatBullying, a national young person’s charity who support young people through innovative cyber mentoring, employed four trainees on apprenticeship style provision in 2008. They also cited a lack of relevant Apprenticeship frameworks as the main reason for not engaging in formal Apprenticeships. They work with the Open University to provide training for their apprentices, and ensure that the apprentices can evidence their work at BeatBullying, through essays and assignments, throughout their course. Working with the Open University allows their apprentices to work towards a higher education qualification.

Financial constraints

9.15 Financial constraints were also reported to be a barrier in the NESS (2007) with five percent of employers stating ‘financial constraints/training is too expensive/can’t afford it’. The Voluntary Sector Skills Survey (2007) found that one third of Voluntary Sector employers did not hold a training and development budget, and that 57 per cent of employers who had skills gaps stated a lack of funding as the reason for this. There are often additional costs associated with offering Apprenticeship provision, which Third Sector organisations will need to raise funding to meet.

9.16 The Sage Gateshead has also faced financial challenges in engaging with Apprenticeships: “Obviously, we are a non-profit distributing organisation, we just don’t have the money to fund core staff members to do those things. We were very lucky to have some of my time.” (The Sage Gateshead.) Employing a manager two days a week to manage the Apprenticeship process has meant they have had to try and make a surplus on some of the training programmes they are currently delivering to pay for this.

Preference for in-house training

9.17 Throughout the research a number of organisations have been identified that offer in-house style informal Apprenticeships. The NESS (2007) found that two per cent
of employers did not engage with Apprenticeships because ‘we prefer to train in-house’.

9.18 Anderson and Metcalf (2001) found that many organisations prefer to design their own in-house training and therefore do not engage with accredited training programmes such as Apprenticeships. Anderson and Metcalf (2001) further suggest that larger establishments often have the resources to design their own training programmes tailored to their business; making them less reliant upon the support of national programmes such as Apprenticeships. The flexibilities of Apprenticeships need to be outlined to employers to engage a higher number of Third Sector employers in Apprenticeships.

Summary

9.19 Third Sector employers face a range of barriers that hinder or sometimes prohibit their engagement with Apprenticeships. Some of these are sometimes due to positive reasons such as their workforce already being trained; however, there are a number of barriers which need to be overcome for employers. The NAS should therefore emphasise the relevance of Apprenticeships to the Third Sector and encourage employers to offer Apprenticeships. They should fully understand the barriers faced by employers and consider alternative ways of supporting the Third Sector in their engagement. They should primarily aim Apprenticeships at young people who are entering the workforce due to a high percentage of the existing workforce being highly qualified, however for those adults who aren’t qualified Apprenticeships should be available to them.
10 Examples of good practice: engaging with Apprenticeships

10.1 This section sets out the characteristics of good practice for Third Sector employer engagement with Apprenticeships. In this section we draw upon the interviews carried out with representatives of the organisations featured as case studies. This good practice draws on ten case studies; the elements of good practice that are outlined as part of this research should not be considered as a complete list of desirable characteristics for Third Sector organisations. These features may be part of an overall model that works well; therefore implementing these isolating features may not improve an organisation’s engagement. However, this good practice does outline elements of good practice that Third Sector organisations may find useful in helping them to overcome barriers they may face and for the NAS to understand ways of driving up the demand for Apprenticeships.

Clear business case to recruit apprentices

10.2 The Sage Gateshead had a notably clear business case for recruiting apprentices. They needed a workforce that could “lead music and music education; music learning and participation, that reflects the communities that live in the North East of England” (Wendy, The Sage Gateshead). They needed people who were “able to work with people of all ages, they needed to be from diverse backgrounds, and they needed to be diverse technically, geographically, based across the region and they need to be diverse in the kinds of music they specialise in” (Head of Practitioner Development, The Sage Gateshead). It was recognised that the people of the North East of England would want to engage in many different kinds of music and the workforce at The Sage Gateshead needed to be able to meet these needs.

10.3 Other organisations also had a clear business rationale for their apprentices. Rathbone has to put together a business case for each apprentice they recruit, ensuring there is a real need for an apprentice. The Hoxton Apprentice is a social enterprise set up to train people who have been unemployed for at least six months and are disadvantaged (such as those living in hostels and those with no qualifications); they teach them the skills necessary to obtain a real job within the hospitality sector. This is their business rationale which is clear and will continue if they convert to offering formal LSC Apprenticeships.

Recruitment and brokerage good practice

10.4 The matching of individuals to specific employers is important to the success of Apprenticeships. Therefore, once identified, the specific skills of individuals often need to be carefully matched to appropriate frameworks and suitable employers.
10.5 ViSTA goes beyond simply advertising Apprenticeship placements and its uniqueness lies in its comprehensive brokerage model by offering a service to both the learner and the employer. Often, learning providers will focus their attention on the learner without a true understanding of the employers’ needs. Through understanding the context of their Third Sector employers ViSTA acts as a mediator between the employer and the learning provider. If employers do not feel their needs are being met, or if there are any problems such as unexpected assessments, ViSTA will liaise with the learning provider and employer until a solution is found.

Number of apprentices starting and completing Apprenticeships

10.6 A number of the organisations we spoke to offer Apprenticeship places to around two or three individuals at any one time. Although the Hoxton Apprentice and Albion in the Community are not currently delivering a formal Apprenticeship programme, they are aiming to engage a large number of apprentices once they begin and this could be used to inform good practice.

10.7 The Hoxton Apprentice will offer places to about 12 apprentices (at any one time once converted to a formal Apprenticeship). Hoxton Apprentice use an innovative model, they were set up to offer training opportunities to unemployed individuals, and although they have permanent staff working there, around 50 per cent of their workforce are trainees. Albion in the Community are set to take on 24 apprentices due to the planned expansion of their stadium; this equates to four recruits for each of their six departments.

Progression to long-term employment

10.8 Progression from Apprenticeships to long-term employment is important to a number of organisations. The majority (five out of seven) of apprentices recruited by The Parks Trust went on to secure employment with their host employers, with a further individual gaining employment elsewhere.

10.9 Rathbone only recruited apprentices that they knew they would employ once their training was completed. However, they ensured that the training they gave to them was transferrable to ensure it would benefit them in future jobs.

10.10 Although the Hoxton Apprentice are not currently providing an LSC Apprenticeship, once converted they will continue to offer the following support which could be seen as good practice. Currently their brokerage team ensures apprentices find the right job or further training once their Apprenticeship training is complete. Once the individuals have left their Apprenticeship the ‘In Touch’ team provides support to those who need it to ensure they retain employment or training.

10.11 The Hoxton Apprentice provides its apprentices with help to secure employment, offering support preparing CVs and attending job fairs. They also make use of personal networks to help get their apprentices back into work:
“They get the opportunity to go on visits or site visits to different markets or just different businesses. What we’re trying to do is get some day releases into different organisations so they see somewhere else and give them a taster of where they’d like to work.”

(Jane Sanderson, Hoxton Apprentice)

**Adapting and developing new Apprenticeship frameworks**

10.12 Some of the organisations featured as case studies initiated local action which led to increased Apprenticeship provision. One such example of this was ViSTA who developed Youth Work Apprenticeship provision in Somerset. They worked with their employers and Somerset County Council to develop their understanding and appreciation of Apprenticeship frameworks to show that it would be relevant to their organisations.

10.13 ViSTA intervened as existing youth work provision was based on the predictable nature of the statutory sector’s day-to-day work. In contrast, the Third Sector’s day-to-day work varies considerably due to the tasks that are carried out. They therefore needed an accommodating assessment process which could flex with their employers needs. The technical certificate, which makes up part of the Youth Work Apprenticeship, created a lot of additional work for candidates and ViSTA changed the process, shaping it to fit employers work plans. Youth Work is an ideal Apprenticeship framework for some roles in the Third Sector, and apprentices on this framework have the potential to empathise with the young people that they work with.

**Offering bespoke provision and dedicated personal support to Apprentices**

10.14 The Sage Gateshead has been involved in creating bespoke provision for employers. CCSKills in conjunction with the LSC and The Sage Gateshead have led them to recognise that the knowledge and expertise required to deliver the Creative Apprenticeship lay within the sector itself, and not with further education providers. This innovative approach sees The Sage Gateshead delivering the Apprenticeship training whilst Gateshead College manage the LSC contract including quality assurance and site visits.

10.15 A number of Third Sector organisations have faced similar challenges to The Parks Trust where the location or availability of training providers hamper Apprenticeship programmes. Albion in the Community will overcome this problem by providing on-site facilities for apprentices to complete their work. The Hoxton Apprentice have overcome the issue of their trainees needing to attend college (for their NVQ) by providing an IT suite on site; and ensuring that their apprentices can do their learning and exams online. They believe the advantages of this approach are clearly apparent and will continue to use this approach when they have converted to offering formal Apprenticeships.

10.16 In all good practice, employers offering Apprenticeships provide dedicated personnel, such as tutors and supervisors, to monitor the progress and welfare of apprentices. Offering training in a number of forms from on-the-job training, to
residential trips; and from delivering in colleges or workshops was also considered important.

10.17 Rathbone use mentoring to support the individuals on their Apprenticeship places, this benefited one apprentice who explained that they would not have finished the course if they had not received this support.

**Working with disadvantaged young people**

10.18 The Third Sector is value driven and notable for the support it provides to: the most disadvantaged in society, young people not in education employment or training (NEETs) and those who have multiple needs. One Stakeholder outlined how there should be greater recognition of the significant achievements that Third Sector employers and providers make with such young people, such as: attendance; improvements in literacy skills; confidence and behaviour; and skills development.

10.19 A number of the case study organisations worked with disadvantaged young people. They therefore chose to recruit apprentices from these client groups to meet their organisation’s wider aims. Catch 22 recruit their own client group and find that they need intensive support to complete the framework. They provide individual support, mentoring and guidance to the individuals until they feel secure in the workplace.

**Investment of additional resources and funding**

10.20 A number of the Third Sector employers reported increased apprentice retention, and increased recruitment where funding was available to supplement the standard Apprenticeship wage. Organisations realised that the standard Apprenticeship wage was not enough for people to live on. Additional supplements offered to apprentices to increase retention included: transport to work and paid childcare. However, funding was not always available to make this possible for all organisations. For instance, S&D Training provide their apprentices with additional training not covered by the Apprenticeship framework. They also offer transport for the Apprenticeships they offer and supplement apprentice’s wages.

**Summary**

10.21 Our research has found that engagement with the Apprenticeship programme is most effective where there is a clear business rationale for engagement. The matching of individuals to specific employers is also important to successful Apprenticeships. Therefore, once identified, the specific skills of individuals often need to be carefully matched to appropriate frameworks and suitable employers. Specific examples of good practice include: expansion of Third Sector specific Apprenticeship provision; working with disadvantaged young people; providing support to Apprentices; and additional investment to ease Apprentice recruitment and aid retention.
11 Third Sector Apprenticeship models and typologies

11.1 This section summarises the main types of Apprenticeships and outlines prevalent delivery models, whilst also considering their benefits and relevance to the Third Sector.

Types of Apprenticeships

Employer-led Apprenticeships

11.2 In this type of Apprenticeship employers identify a need for an apprentice. These Apprentices are paid a wage of at least £80 per week by the employer. On average, employers pay apprentices between £80 to £100 per week. Apprentices receive on-the-job training and assessment and usually spend up to one day a week with a learning provider.

11.3 Within the Third Sector we found limited examples of employers (excluding training providers) engaging with Apprenticeships. A number of training providers however did employ their own apprentices (not as programme-led apprentices) to further the aims of their business, such as S&D Training and SLLC. As employers, Third Sector organisations appreciate that Apprenticeships are not new, but as Emma-Jane Cross of Beatbullying pointed out: “at a time when Third Sector organisations are reporting more staff recruitment and retention problems, while bemoaning skills shortages among employees, they offer a solution”.

11.4 In other sectors, evidence suggests that well-managed Apprenticeship schemes have: filled skills gaps; increased productivity; improved competitiveness; and shaped a committed and competent workforce. Effective schemes have also saved money on training and recruitment costs, because staff turnover rates were reduced. Emma-Jane Cross of Beatbullying, and others, have been pressing the case for Third Sector employer-led Apprenticeships for many months. The research Beatbullying have initiated suggests the sector will support Apprenticeships, but that they need the opportunity to make them relevant to the skills shortages and skills gaps that they face.

Programme-led Apprenticeships (PLAs)

11.5 Introduced in 2003 and fully funded by the LSC; programme-led Apprenticeships (PLAs) enable learners to train for an Apprenticeship without employee status. OFSTED identify three types of PLA provision:

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■ Model A) Learners undertake a planned period of initial provider-based learning that contributes towards an Apprenticeship framework, such as elements of the Technical Certificate, before progressing into an employer-led Apprenticeship to complete the Apprenticeship framework.

■ Model B) Learners receive the same learning experience as if they were in an employer-led Apprenticeship but are placed by their learning provider in a work placement role with an employer, and do not therefore have employee status.

■ Model C) Learners are enrolled on full-time vocational programmes that contribute towards an Apprenticeship framework, with the intention of progressing to employment or an employer-led Apprenticeship in order to complete the framework.

11.6 OFSTED also reported that those learners who progressed into an employer-led Apprenticeship after an initial period of training (Model A) had a higher than average success rate and completed their Apprenticeship quicker than learners who enrolled directly onto employer-led Apprenticeships.

11.7 In those PLAs resembling Model B the apprentice has a work-based learning placement with an employer, rather than full-time employment. Those apprentices who are based with a learning provider or college may, if they are eligible, receive up to £30 Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) per week. However, if their family circumstances mean they are not eligible, they will be working 37 hours a week for no payment. OFSTED found that those PLAs resembling Model C, usually provided in further education colleges, tend to progress a smaller proportion of learners, than other PLA models, into employer-led Apprenticeships.

11.8 The Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills (IUS) Select Committee has called for all PLAs to be housed outside of Apprenticeships and to be re-labelled ‘pre-apprenticeship training’. The Select Committee advises that PLAs ‘could provide a useful preparation for an employer-led Apprenticeship but they are not Apprenticeships within the meaning of the proposals in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill.’ However, the Commission has been advised by witnesses that placing all PLA provision outside Apprenticeships would mean losing a lot of highly valuable PLA provision that benefits greatly from its ‘Apprenticeship’ status, and provides many learners with the opportunity to progress to full Apprenticeships.

11.9 PLAs have been an extremely important model for the delivery of Apprenticeships. Rathbone is featured in the accompanying case studies as an employer; however, as a learning provider they are a strong advocate of the PLA approach. Many providers who offer PLAs, such as Rathbone, have also recognised the potential for them to take on their own apprentices as an employer.

11.10 It has been widely acknowledged that the recession is likely to contribute to a continued increase in PLAs. Due to the current recession, some apprentices who

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have been employed are losing their employer. This is the result of prior trading conditions meaning redundancy or even the company ceasing to trade. Under these circumstances learning providers seek to find another employer for the apprentice, but this can prove increasingly difficult. In many instances this can lead to the continuation of an Apprenticeship with an employer who can offer a PLA. This model gives the work based learning required but it is less than ideal as the employer is often unwilling or unable to pay the wages, there is little financial support available for the learner, who will still be working 37 hours per week. PLAs are not the ideal model for the delivery of Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship delivery models

Learning consortia engagement with Apprenticeships

11.11 As outlined previously, over time VCS consortia have been established in all regions to deliver a range of functions from information synthesis, to representation of the sector to senior policy makers. The spatial level of consortia varies, many are sub-regional and in the East of England a consortia has been developed to cover each of the sub-regions.

11.12 Some learning consortia have also engaged in the Third Sector Peer Coaching Programme for Learning and Skills offered by NIACE. This programme aims to support Third Sector organisations to become providers. Those organisations involved in the programme were given access to a team of highly experienced peer coaches, all of whom were from the Third Sector with experience of managing learning programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This peer-coaching programme offers short-term, support and guidance tailored to meet the needs of each individual Third Sector organisation. The support offered covers help with the following: self-assessment; preparing for inspections; gaining LSC funding as a sub-contractor and through partnership/consortia working; and completing the Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) and Invitation to Tender (ITT) stages of LSC e-tendering. This programme introduces Apprenticeships to Third Sector organisations as potential providers rather than employers.

11.13 There are a number of consortia that have engaged with Apprenticeships such as SLLC. They are one of the largest consortia enabling them to offer Apprenticeships; many of the smaller consortia are unable to engage with Apprenticeships given their limited size and the minimum Apprenticeship contract volumes required by the LSC. One stakeholder we consulted commented that:

“A very small consortium somewhere else, and I can’t even remember which one it was, had really hoped to be able to bid for Apprenticeships but the minimum contract available in their region was 300 placements and a small Third Sector organisation or a smallish Third Sector organisation was just not in a position to deliver that, either themselves or through partnerships” (Stakeholder interviewee, NIACE).
11.14 Other Third Sector learning consortia are also engaged with Apprenticeships, such as ETEC in the North East of England. Consortia are supported through Consortia+ as described in Chapter 8.

**Group Training Associations (GTAs)**

11.15 Group Training Associations train individuals on behalf of a group of employers using a ‘statutory training levy’ paid by the employers along with further funds from Industry Training Boards. They were set up in the 1960s and their remit has expanded, however their core characteristics are:

- Training organisations governed by employers.
- Companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.
- Their curriculum is centred on Apprenticeships for: engineering, construction and manufacturing.

11.16 GTAs are governed by senior executives from employers who have subscribed to the GTA. Due to them being limited by guarantee and their charity status all surplus is reinvested into the GTA. Due to the Nature of GTAs they are seen to be Third Sector organisations with ‘business like character’34. There are around 40 GTAs still in operation in England with a joint turnover of £90-£100 million. There were around 150 original GTAs but these have been reduced due to multiple reasons including: cost-cutting by Training and Enterprise Councils; the neglect of capital funding; and mergers and acquisitions by FE colleges.

11.17 GTAs focus on Apprenticeships and Train to Gain often in technical occupations including: engineering and construction. However other occupations which GTAs have been formed in include: social care, dental nursing, manufacturing management and logistics. GTAs ensure that the training which is sourced is high-quality, relevant and flexible; which could be of value to Third Sector employers who need provision which is flexible to their needs.

**Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs)**

11.18 ATAs are based on the Australian Group Training Companies (GTCs). These companies employ apprentices and hire them out to host companies as a flexible workforce to enable the individual to gain their work experience required for their Apprenticeship framework. The host companies pay the ATA/GTC a fee which covers the individual’s wages and a management fee. By using the model the bureaucracy of Apprenticeships can be reduced due to the ATA dealing with most of the paperwork and payroll, which could be useful for Third Sector organisations with limited capacity.

11.19 Due to the flexible nature of ATAs, Third Sector organisation would be able to hand the apprentice back to the ATA with two weeks’ notice. This could be useful

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34 Ibid.
in the current economic climate for SMEs and Third Sector organisations due to the unpredictable nature of their finances; it enables them to engage with Apprenticeships with less risk.

11.20 The Government have just released a prospectus\(^{35}\) outlining their plans to fund up to 10 ATAs. These will be spread across the country and set up by 2009, they are aiming to be able to deliver 15,000 Apprenticeship places by 2014/15.

11.21 ATAs were viewed positively as a model for the Third Sector by the stakeholders consulted in this research, but only if they were truly employer-led and shaped by employer needs. One stakeholder consulted, suggested that an ATA model could pose: “tricky legal situations, with regards to, the extent one Third Sector organisation is responsible for other organisations or partners. As a charity can’t take on that responsibility, it just can’t. It’s not legal” (Stakeholder).

**Summary**

11.22 Our research has revealed that there is a role for organisations that bring together relatively small Third Sector organisations, who by themselves can’t sustain engagement with the Apprenticeship programme. That role is currently carried out by a whole range of organisations including consortia. Further exploration of the potential for an outside agent to manage Third Sector Apprenticeships, such as in the ATA model and consultation with the Third Sector on the appropriateness of such models is advised and could be facilitated by the Third Sector National Learning Alliance.

11.23 A Third Sector Apprenticeship model should be based on key characteristics of consortia engagement as demonstrated by the South London Learning Consortia and ViSTA. Current delivery models in the Third Sector reflect aspects of GTAs and ATAs, which have employer engagement as an integral feature. The Third Sector could collaborate to establish an ATA; building on innovative experience within the sector of Apprenticeship delivery and employer engagement.

\(^{35}\) NAS (2009) *Testing Alternative Delivery Models: Group Training Associations and Apprenticeships Training Agencies Prospectus*
12 Conclusions and recommendations: key messages

12.1 This report provides a review of Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeships and identifies best practice and effective models of engagement. Our findings and recommendations are summarised below:

**Progress of Skills- Third Sector**

12.2 *Skills- Third Sector* has made good early progress, they are now established, have appointed their Chair, and have a clear set of aims and objectives. Organisations are looking forward to working with them to make positive changes for the Third Sector.

12.3 *Skills-Third Sector* is appropriately positioned to scope a Third Sector Apprenticeship framework given their responsibility for the development of: the National Occupational Standards, Apprenticeship frameworks and the Sector Qualification Strategies for the sector.

12.4 **Recommendation:** *Skills- Third Sector* should lead on considering if a specific Third Sector Apprenticeship framework is needed and if it should include: fundraising and managing volunteers.

**Third Sector employer engagement in the South East**

12.5 The South East has the highest proportion of Third Sector employees than any other English region. Despite this, only 4.5% of Third Sector employers offered Apprenticeships to their employees during the last 12 months, out of a total of 14,047.

12.6 The scope of this research did not include a detailed examination of the steps needed to increase Third Sector employer demand for Apprenticeships. However, it has identified a number of barriers faced in engaging Third Sector employers with Apprenticeships. In particular, 20 per cent of Third Sector organisations do not perceive Apprenticeships to be relevant to them, which is a major obstacle if trying to increase employer engagement.

12.7 A number of key learning points related to data collection processes were also identified through this research and could inform future work in this area. The stakeholders were aware of the limitations of the management information available, and the difficulties this posed in quantifying provision and engagement in the Third Sector with Apprenticeships both in the South East and nationally.

12.8 **Recommendation:** Ensure the relevance of Apprenticeships to the Third Sector is communicated in the South East to stimulate demand and increase employer
engagement. In order to provide a robust baseline of Third Sector engagement with Apprenticeship provision and uptake it will be crucial for robust statistics to be collected.

Development of provision and frameworks

12.9 Business Administration was the most prevalent Apprenticeship framework utilised by Third Sector organisations interviewed as part of this research. Other frameworks utilised include: Youth Work and Hospitality.

12.10 However, 20 per cent of Third Sector organisations felt that the available Apprenticeship frameworks are not flexible enough and preferred in-house training at a higher level. Those consulted as part of this research expressed an interest in the development of a framework specific to the Third Sector. It was suggested that such a framework might include: fundraising, campaigning and managing volunteers.

12.11 Recommendation: Skills-Third Sector should lead on considering if a specific Third Sector Apprenticeship framework is needed. With the recognition that such a framework might be developed specifically as an Advanced Apprenticeship covering: fundraising, campaigning and managing volunteers.

Meeting Third Sector employer’s needs

12.12 Stakeholder and Third Sector employer opinion suggests that a specific Third Sector Apprenticeship framework is worthy of consideration. Good practice from the Creative Apprenticeship, such as close consultation with employers through the relevant Sector Skills Council and converting in-house provision, could be drawn upon when developing this framework. Further support maybe needed for Third Sector organisations if frameworks are changed, and to ensure they successfully engage with Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships need to offer clear career progression opportunities.

12.13 There is clear evidence of demand for Apprenticeship style training in the Third Sector, however most current provision does not entirely meet Third Sector employer’s needs. Third Sector employers who offer in-house Apprenticeship style training include: Beatbullying, Jamie Oliver’s restaurant Fifteen and The Parks Trust. Many Third Sector employers preferred informal Apprenticeship style provision, as it enabled them to: design their owning specific training, train who they wanted and to be flexible around their own working conditions.

12.14 Recommendation: The NAS and Skills-Third Sector should create greater flexibility in Apprenticeship frameworks; considering how Third Sector in-house provision could be given Apprenticeship status.

Brokerage and support services

12.15 Brokerage and support services available to, and offered by Third Sector organisations, include: National Apprenticeships Service (NAS), Integrated
Brokerage, Sector Skills Councils, Third Sector Learning Consortia, Consortia+ and the Third Sector National Learning Alliance. Where more specialised support has been developed, led by Third Sector consortia or employers, the potential to share best practice should be further explored.

12.16 **Recommendation:** Consider the need for Third Sector specialist intermediaries, (such as those above), which may sit in the NAS regional services to support Third Sector employers with the processes involved in engaging with the Apprenticeship programme. NAS should consider how they can support existing Third Sector brokerage arrangements and need to identify and build links with those currently in operation.

**Tackling barriers to Third Sector engagement**

12.17 The Third Sector is currently engaging with Apprenticeships; however, there remain barriers to increasing the sector’s engagement. These include:

- Limited awareness of the relevance of Apprenticeships amongst Third Sector employers.
- Limited capacity of many small Third Sector employers making it difficult for them to manage the bureaucratic processes involved in engagement with Apprenticeships.
- Preference amongst Third Sector employers for in-house training as an alternative to Apprenticeships.
- The profile of the Third Sector workforce, and the appropriateness of Apprenticeships. Approximately one third of current Third Sector employees have a degree or equivalent qualification, more than double that of the private sector, therefore they are highly skilled already.
- The high net cost of employing apprentices prohibits engagement with Apprenticeships as one third of Third Sector employers do not hold a training and development budget and struggle to raise the funding necessary to support apprentices.

12.18 **Recommendations:** NAS needs to fully understand the barriers facing Third Sector organisations who want to offer Apprenticeships. NAS needs to raise awareness of Apprenticeships and their relevance amongst Third Sector organisations to ensure they recognise the benefits. Promotion of Apprenticeships to Third Sector employers needs to be undertaken in a targeted way to increase demand. Efforts should be focused on engaging young people seeking to enter the sector from school age by working with career advisory intermediaries. This could be achieved through targeted marketing materials and through advocacy by the regional NAS service teams and engagement with the National Vacancy Matching Service (VMS). NAS could also explore ways in which the process experienced by employers can be simplified, and the burden on employers minimised. There is a need to explore whether some of the Apprenticeship style training currently delivered in-house, could be converted to the Apprenticeship programme. Our research also identified a need for a different approach to procurement for the
Third Sector, which enables contracts for fewer Apprenticeships to be awarded by NAS.

Examples of good practice

12.19 Our research has found that engagement with the Apprenticeship programme is most effective where there is a clear business rationale for engagement. The matching of individuals to specific employers is also important to the success of Apprenticeships. In best practice examples, specific skills of individuals are carefully matched to appropriate frameworks and suitable employers. A number of brokerage approaches were identified through the case studies which could potentially lead to increased demand for Apprenticeships from Third Sector employers.

12.20 Specific examples of good practice include: expansion of Third Sector specific Apprenticeship provision; working with disadvantaged young people; providing support to apprentices; and additional investment to ease apprentice recruitment and aid retention.

12.21 **Recommendation:** The good practice set out in the case studies should be built upon to drive up demand for Apprenticeships amongst Third Sector employees. The good practice should also be used by Third Sector organisations to engage with Apprenticeships.

Third Sector Apprenticeship models

12.22 There is a need for innovative Apprenticeship delivery models to increase Third Sector employer engagement. Such a model could be based on key characteristics of consortia demonstrated by the South London Learning Consortia or ViSTA. ViSTA has pioneered work around Third Sector Apprenticeships and has sparked interest from other LSC regions interested in developing and building on this. Current delivery models in the Third Sector reflect aspects of GTAs and ATAs, which have employer engagement as integral to them.

12.23 **Recommendation:** Consider the range of models for engaging the Third Sector with Apprenticeships. Build upon those which offer the greatest support to organisations that struggle with their internal capacity and reduce the burden of bureaucracy. Explore the potential for this function to be filled by an outside agent, such as ATAs, and consult the Third Sector on the appropriateness of such models. Such a consultation could be facilitated by the Third Sector National Learning Alliance.
## Appendix A: Stakeholder consultees

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<td>Stuart Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Hayes</td>
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<td>Tim Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aidan Jackson</td>
<td>Life Long Learning</td>
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<td>Ian Ruff</td>
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<td>Alan Rowen</td>
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<td>Mandy Crawford-Lee</td>
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<td>Jean Robert Jones</td>
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<td>Ramesh Kukar</td>
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<td>Su Mitchell</td>
<td>Sussex Voluntary and Community Learning Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Freeman</td>
<td>UK Workforce Hub</td>
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## Appendix B: Case study consultees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan Sanders</td>
<td>Albion in the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Mead</td>
<td>Albion in the Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kay Smith</td>
<td>Children’s Links</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomasin Nicholds</td>
<td>Children’s Links</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane Sanderson</td>
<td>Hoxton Apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Anderson</td>
<td>Hoxton Apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briony Serginson</td>
<td>The Parks Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Foot</td>
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<td>Steven Gardner</td>
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<td>Wendy Smith</td>
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<td>Karen Miatchell</td>
<td>S&amp;D Training</td>
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<td>Toni Stratton</td>
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<td>Michelle Peacock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen Jeffrey</td>
<td>South London Learning Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Kerr</td>
<td>ViSTA</td>
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Appendix C: Bibliography

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Appendix D: Case studies
Introduction

Albion in the Community is the charitable arm of Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club. It is a not-for-profit organisation with six main departments: football courses, football inclusion, disability football, education, health, and community partners. The organisation receives funding from the: European Social Fund, Learning and Skills Council and Football Foundation; to support communities through football, education and health initiatives.

Albion in the Community delivers a number of training programmes including formal level 2 NVQ qualifications such as the Community Sports Leaders Award and Apprenticeships. Albion in the Community and Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club plan to expand and their new stadium is due to open in 2011 which. Their Chief Executive explains this will “create opportunities for education, skills training and jobs as well as providing a wonderful new facility for the city of Brighton and Hove.”

As an employer, Albion in the Community are considering how they might engage with the Apprenticeship programme to increase their workforce, and develop their skills base, both needed to expand. The new facilities provided by the stadium will enable Albion in the Community to employ approximately 24 apprentices, four for each of the organisation’s departments.

This level of recruitment will double Albion in the Community’s current workforce and clearly demonstrates their ambition and belief in the Apprenticeship programme.

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At a glance

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<td>• Ambition and willingness to work hard</td>
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<td>Apprenticeship</td>
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</table>
Successes

Albion in the Community’s successes to date are connected to their ambition and enthusiasm for Apprenticeships rather than their experience of implementing the programme.

Raised their own awareness of the Apprenticeship programme

Although Albion in the Community was already aware of the Apprenticeship programme they have worked hard to raise their understanding of the programme specifically as an employer.

Albion in the Community was introduced to the idea of employing apprentices by the Apprenticeship Manager at their local Further Education College. The Education Manager at Albion in the Community attended an evening at the college and was introduced to the benefits of Apprenticeships and how they would work for them. He explains this further: “We know there is obviously a big Government push for them. A lot of people out of work and if you can get them on an Apprenticeship you can up-skill them. As Alan Sugar did the adverts we just knew it was something we had to be involved in.”

Their relationship with the Apprenticeship Manager at the local college has since grown and Albion in the Community has met with a representative of the National Apprenticeship Service in the South East. To further understand more about how Apprenticeships work, Albion in the Community have also become familiar with the Apprenticeship website and are seeking additional information from other employers who have successfully piloted similar schemes.

Based on their increased understanding and the contacts made, Albion in the Community is considering the use of the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching System as a way to recruit apprentices in the future.

Recognising the benefits of Apprenticeships

Albion in the Community currently deliver part of the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence and are therefore aware of what is involved and the benefits that Apprenticeships can bring.

It is this knowledge, and their plans to expand, that have led Albion in the Community to consider apprentices as part of their own workforce. They feel that the skills an apprentice can bring will be valuable to them, as their Education Manager explains: “We can bring someone in and obviously help them develop, support them the way we want to. You know sort of a blank canvas that comes through the doors. We show them how we work things here and we can develop them to what we need.”

Another benefit of Apprenticeships is the non-traditional learners that the training often attracts. With its other programmes, Albion in the Community has found that providing learning in a football club environment has been successful in attracting non-traditional learners who may not otherwise consider training as an option. The nature of the training that Albion in the Community currently provides, such as coaching skills, lends itself to being carried out within the football club and they are confident that they will be able to replicate elements of this within their Apprenticeship programme. Their Education Manager explains: “We’re hoping people prefer that environment; where they can relax and it’s informal, rather than going to sit in a classroom.”
Barriers and solutions

As Albion in the Community is looking to engage with Apprenticeships in the future they have yet to experience many barriers with the implementation of the programme. They have considered challenges for the future; one of these being a potential difficulty in recruiting potential apprentices. However, they feel as a training provider they will be able to overcome this through the use of their existing networks such as: Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and local recruitment agencies; alongside additional services such as the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching System.

The workspace needed to accommodate apprentices

The main barrier to Albion in the Community establishing their Apprenticeship programme is the facilities available to house the number of apprentices they want to recruit. Ideally, Albion in the Community want to employ the apprentices themselves rather than simply provide work placements on a programme-led Apprenticeship. They recognise the need for apprentices to be based on the employer’s premises and therefore would need to provide desks and facilities for the additional 24 apprentices.

Albion in the Community is currently seeking capital investment to develop a dedicated Apprenticeship centre within the new Brighton and Hove Albion stadium, due to open in 2011. This will enable them to provide additional facilities including: office space to house the apprentices and training space to develop their skills. If the investment can not be found, Albion in the Community will ensure that office space for 24 apprentices is provided as part of their expansion plans.

As it is not possible to eliminate this barrier until the new stadium opens in 2011, Albion in the Community in the meantime is exploring how they can support their local provider in delivering programme-led Apprenticeships. This would involve them offering work placements for limited periods of time and therefore removing the need for a large number of desks or training space. This approach will enable Albion in the Community to start to work with apprentices and for them to experience the benefits of apprentices as soon as possible.

Contact info

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Introduction

Catch 22 is a national charity (previously Rainer South East and Crime Concern) that works with young people who find themselves in difficult situations. The charity focuses on five themes where they can make a real and lasting difference in young people’s lives, for their families and for the whole community. These five themes regularly impact on each other and are: ‘learn’, ‘earn a living’, ‘live somewhere safe’, ‘steer clear of crime’ and ‘give something back’.

Catch 22 has provided Apprenticeships in the Third Sector as a training provider for over twenty years as part of their work. Through their experience of delivering Apprenticeships, and as the organisation grew, in 2007 Catch 22 began employing their own apprentices.

Since 2007, Catch 22 has employed three Business Administration apprentices in their Portsmouth office. This has been successful to date, and they hope to replicate this successful model throughout the organisation nationally. Catch 22 feel that employing apprentices is the best way to grow a highly skilled and ambitious workforce. The Executive Manager of Catch 22 in Portsmouth explains: “We find that Apprenticeships are a way for us to be able to grow our own talent so that we are then able to develop our own workforce for the future.”
Successes

Recruiting from their client base

As a Third Sector organisation, Catch 22 has recruited their own client group (young people in difficult situations) who are often unemployed and aged between 16 to 24 - making them ideal candidates for an Apprenticeship programme.

Recruiting from their own client group has a number of advantages to both the individual and the organisation. There is an increased chance of the individual completing the programme due to their understanding of the potential recruits’ circumstances, the reduced cost of advertising vacancies and the chance to make a lasting difference to a young persons life – a key aim of the organisation.

For the apprentices themselves, they are given the opportunity to work for an organisation that has often already had a positive impact on their life and are therefore incredibly motivated and excited to give something back to Catch 22.

Increasing the number of apprentices

Catch 22 is delighted with their apprentices to date and are looking to recruit more as they expand in the future. The organisation was formed after a merger between Rainer South East and Crime Concern during 2008 leading to significant structural change. This has been successful and is something that many charities are considering due to the current economic climate. The merger has created an increased client base and an increased capacity to grow.

Since employing apprentices on the Business Administration framework the benefits of Apprenticeships have been felt across the organisation and their business case demonstrated. Additional frameworks have been identified by Catch 22 that are highly relevant to their organisation, and they are excited at the prospect of leading the way in engagement with the Apprenticeship programme.

Catch 22’s Executive Manager in Portsmouth explains: “Moving forward, as an organisation, Catch 22 want to work with more apprentices. Business Administration is a natural sector that we would be engaged with, but we also do youth work and work in criminal justice. We are currently looking at what sector frameworks there are for those two areas so we can complement the work that we do as an organisation through Apprenticeships.”

Barriers and solutions

The additional support needed by some apprentices

As a national young persons charity, Catch 22 employs apprentices from all walks of life, and do not recruit the most ‘employer ready’ apprentices. This often means that some of their apprentices require additional support to help them succeed with the programme.

One of Catch 22’s successes is the employment of their own client group and they plan to continue this despite the challenges it presents. The young people they employ might not necessarily excel from the outset, and will need support, mentoring and guidance until they feel secure in the workplace.
Catch 22 recognise that this additional support affects the number of apprentices they can employ. They have found that intensive support focused on a small number of apprentices is effective and they do not want to jeopardise this by employing too many apprentices. Without the additional support, Catch 22 fear there would be a larger number of drop-outs with less apprentices completing the full framework.

The Executive Manager at Catch 22 explains: “Some of our young people, they come in and they have lots and lots of support and development needs and it might take them years of interventions with us before they go on and do something that influences the rest of their life. A lot of young people we pass have a huge amount of talent, they just need channeling. What we’re looking to do is to say ‘right, well let’s offer some opportunities for the people that maybe wouldn’t have them otherwise’.”

Ensuring the benefits of Apprenticeships are known throughout the organisation

Although Catch 22 have provided Apprenticeships for over twenty years they found that internally some of their staff, including senior managers, needed persuading of their benefits. A number of misconceptions around a low-work ethic and low completion rates needed to be addressed.

After identifying a business need for apprentices, Catch 22 used first hand experiences to demonstrate the benefits of Apprenticeships internally by employing just two apprentices. This soon led staff, including the senior managers, to realise the asset apprentices are to an organisation. The apprentices Executive Manager produced a case study of one apprentice, which was distributed across the organisation to demonstrate their impact. The Executive Manager explains what apprentices have brought to Catch 22: “They come in and they’re young and fresh. They’ve got great ideas and they think about things differently because they’re untainted in a way and they’re learning new practices.”

Catch 22 is delighted with their apprentices to date and feel that success has been shown in a number of ways including the fact that two of the three are now employed having completed their programme. One of the apprentices is currently employed at Catch 22, whilst the other has secured a promotion within another Third Sector organisation.

The Executive Manager at Catch 22 explains her experience: “Both apprentices I’ve had in my time here have come up with ideas that have actually changed the way in which we do our practice. There’s an added benefit there by making it a partnership arrangement rather than, ‘you’re here, you’ll do as you’re told, and this is how it works!”

Contact info

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Address: Great Western House, 34 Isambard Brunel Road, Portsmouth PO1 2RJ
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At a glance

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<td>Model Established</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training Allowance: Children’s Links</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entry Requirements</td>
<td>There are no firm recruitment criteria rather they adopt softer measures in their recruitment process.</td>
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Frameworks offered as a provider:
- Childcare
- Learning and Development
- Play Work
- Teaching Assistants

Frameworks offered to employees:
- Business Administration
- Finance
- Play Work

Location
- National, currently apprentices are employed in Lincolnshire (2) and London (2)

Introduction

Children’s Links is a national charity and social enterprise. Their mission is to improve the quality of children’s, young people’s and families’ life experiences. Children’s Links operate as both a frontline deliverer of children’s services and as a training provider. They have been providing Apprenticeship training since the organisation was founded in 1993 and have employed apprentices since 1999. Their Workforce and Skills Manager reflected that “for a time we were a provider that didn’t necessarily utilise Apprenticeships ourselves [as an employer] and that’s certainly changed”.

Apprentices have become integral to Children’s Links and they currently employ two apprentices in their Boston office and another two in their London office. One is studying an Apprenticeship in Finance, one in Business Administration and the other two are studying the Play Work Apprenticeships in the children’s services side of the organisation. A manager explains how the apprentices they employ fit within Children’s Links: “They are all in very different areas of the organisation but it’s very much around their own continuing professional development but also how we work as an organisation [it], is grow your own employees”. Taking on apprentices as employees allows Children’s Links to “support somebody through in-house learning” their staff identify this as “part of the way we work anyway”. Although their in-house learning isn’t always solely through Apprenticeships, they have “an ethos” of continuous professional development and they believe that employing “Apprentices kind of fits into that.”
Successes

Promoting progression

The Training and Workforce Manager explains what led Children’s Links to employ apprentices: “In terms of what brought us to have apprentices, we’re very much an organisation that has an ethos of grow your own.”

Children’s Links also recognise the importance of ensuring there are clear progression routes for their apprentices, just as they would for their employees, “it’s kind of in our ethos to support people through their development and through the organisation”. Their Head of Workforce and Skills reflects on the routes in Children’s Links and the opportunities for progression: “a lot of our employees have engaged with us through volunteering or through activities with their children, and a few that have gone through quite a broad progression route. That has happened right through to director level really, during the years that we’ve been in existence.”

Some apprentices may wish to leave Children’s Links to progress within the Third Sector after being employed as an apprentice. This is helped through the strong connections Children’s Links has with other Third Sector providers and employers, aiding their transition into the Third Sector.

Recruitment of apprentices

Children’s Links recognise that “like anything it’s making sure you get the right person”. At the moment Children’s Links have four apprentices who they feel are “really good individuals who are really fitting into the organisation and flourishing”. Children’s Links believe that the recruitment process is important and they recognise the need to be proactive and not rely on potential apprentices coming to them.

When recruiting they draw upon their strong relationships with local schools and the support of a recruitment agency they have used for many years to recruit temporary staff. The majority of Children’s Links apprentices come to them from Connexions, schools or other Third Sector Entry to Employment programmes. Children’s Links are always strive to open up more opportunities, and are increasingly seeking to work directly with more schools on the 14-19 agenda. In the future, Children’s Links hope to recruit more apprentices and are keen to engage with adult apprentices to expand and diversify their talent base.

Children’s Links HR department manages their apprentice recruitment process in the same way as other employers; potential apprentices are invited to interview where they are assessed based on their motivation and enthusiasm for working with children. Apprentices also need to provide references and if undertaking the Play Work Apprenticeship a CRB check may also be required.

Children’s Links have found that there are certain steps they can take to ease the recruitment of apprentices; for instance they supplement the £80 a week offered as standard to apprentices. They have found that this level of remuneration makes it easier for them to attract the right candidates. Children’s Links Apprentice Manager also recognises that there is a need for ongoing support to apprentices who are recruited: “For us the major challenge when it comes to hiring apprentices is having the people there to support their development and not deserting them. They have to be there for the long-term”.
Barriers and solutions

Accommodating apprentices needs and offering flexibility

Children’s Links try to offer apprentices flexibility in the courses they are studying. An apprentice that had been with Children’s Links for six months was recruited to a Business Administration framework but had a long term ambition to join the finance side of Children’s Links business. They found that trying to accommodate what he wanted was a challenge as the Business Administration framework does not include a finance element. By developing a flexible way of working, this apprentice has been able to work across two teams and has benefited from extra training. However, Children’s Links Workforce and Skills Manager recognises that there are a lot of Apprenticeship providers out there that would consider this “a real barrier”.

Recognising the relevance of Apprenticeships

Recognising the relevance of Apprenticeships is a barrier to many Third Sector organisations. Children’s Links became aware of the Apprenticeship programme through their work as a provider. However, they believe that the awareness of Apprenticeships is slightly higher in children’s services than in the Third Sector generally. A lack of awareness of the Apprenticeship programme can act as a barrier to Third Sector employer’s engagement. Children’s Links Workforce and Skills Manager reflects on the fact that despite many years of experience of working in the Third Sector she has “never worked in a charity that’s used [the] Apprenticeship programme before”. She considers this to be a real “missed opportunity”. Children’s Links attribute this to a low level of awareness of Apprenticeships within the Third Sector.

She attributes the increased awareness of Apprenticeships in children’s services to familiarity with “qualifications reforms, OFSTED all those sorts of things”. Those in children’s services understand the need for Apprenticeships even though they may not provide them.

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Introduction

The Hoxton Apprentice is a commercially run restaurant that also has a ‘social and environmental conscience’. The restaurant opened in 2004 and was the brainchild of award winning social entrepreneur, Gordon D’Silva and the chef and restaurateur Prue Leith to train unemployed people. In addition to being a successful restaurant, winning several awards, it has also trained over 150 unemployed people since 2004 with a 70% success rate of them gaining employment.

The Hoxton Apprentice’s parent charity is Training for Life, a charity that enables some of the ‘most disadvantaged people to make positive changes to their lives’. Training for Life has a network of Prospect Centres to help local communities improve the quality of their lives. Training for Life Hoxton has a hospitality industry focus, with its social enterprise being the Hoxton Apprentice restaurant. Training for Life also has another social enterprise from another of its Prospect Centres, such as the Dartmouth Apprentice restaurant.

The Hoxton Apprentice is managed by professionals but staffed partly by trainees - approximately half of the workforce are trainees. There are currently four trainees in the front-of-house and four in the back-of-house, but this can increase to up to six in each area depending on levels of funding. The Hoxton Apprentice offers a precursor programme of two months and then their own six month ‘apprenticeship’ style programme. Managing Director of Training for Life explains their programme:

“For us our apprenticeships are an employability programme. We do not invest in those apprentices long term but the major difference between us and the LSC programme is that what we do is get the young people to a stage when they are employable by other hospitality employers. We try to have a throughput of apprentices who can leave our restaurant and immediately move into a commercial environment as a full time employee... Our objective is to move them off into the industry so that we can have a new cohort coming in so that we are in fact training as many people as possible.”

The Hoxton Apprentice is currently considering the LSC Apprenticeship programme to expand their offer and are looking at the options related to this.
Successes

The Hoxton Apprentice’s successes are based around their current non-LSC employability apprenticeship as they are yet to implement the full programme.

A two month precursor programme

The Hoxton Apprentice runs a two month precursor programme before trainees are accepted on to the six month employability apprenticeship.

The two month programme is delivered by Training for Life and attended part time so trainees can retain their benefit entitlement. The programme allows them “to find out a little bit more about the hospitality industry and what would be involved if they were to seek employment in it.” The programme includes elements such as the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate, financial awareness and interactive group exercises to replicate the workplace environment.

The Hoxton Apprentice manager details a number of elements of the course:

“On a Monday there’s a healthy living course so they come and work in our community kitchen and get to cook healthy food. Then they have a few hours in the afternoon to see each section of a restaurant setting. That might be making teas and coffees, hot beverages, going through wines, cocktails, looking at the tills and restaurant service. We are mindful that it finishes at about three, three thirty, so if there are childcare issues after school they can go early.”

Training for Life’s Managing Director explains the importance of the programme:

“Usually two months gives us long enough to work out if they’re going to be able to sustain a regular attendance pattern. It also gives us long enough to work out if the issues that they’re dealing with are sufficiently disabling or interfere with their ability to make a reasonable contribution to holding down a job.

At the end of that two month period, they then apply for an apprenticeship role within the restaurant. They go through a quite rigorous formal commercial interview with the professional staff.”

The precursor programme is currently funded through the Hoxton Apprentice’s fundraising and is not eligible for LSC funding. The Training for Life Managing Director explains how the Hoxton Apprentice is currently investigating this: “In the interest of sustainability we’re looking at whether it would be possible to access some LSC funding for elements of the precursor program. We’re talking to further education colleges about what programmes they have that are acceptable to the LSC that would enable some funding to be pulled down if we brought them into that programme.”

Progression to employment

The Hoxton Apprentice considers one of its main successes to be their track record of securing their trainees employment at the end of the employability apprenticeship.

Training for Life’s Managing Director further explains: “Our experience has been that our six month apprenticeship program is sufficient to tuck them into the industry perfectly adequately.” The Hoxton Apprentice has found that those “who leave the restaurant can immediately move into a commercial environment as a full time employee...They always go straight into full time established roles.”

The majority of trainees from the employability apprenticeship move into employment elsewhere, often in top London restaurants and hospitality groups such as the Hilton, Compass Group and Whitbread. They do
however, often return to the Hoxton Apprentice when they have more skills, to more advanced roles. The manager of the Hoxton Apprentice talks about one past trainee who on finishing the programme moved on to work at a high profile London establishment for three years: “he came back as a chef de partie. He’s a sous chef and how he’s our senior sous.”

The Hoxton Apprentice’s Manager summarises their success: “I think the successes that we’re getting...are the number of people back into the workplace. Not only is it helping them rebuild their lives it’s helping the community and it’s helping the whole country because they’re not in the benefits trap.”

Barriers and solutions

The Hoxton Apprentice has faced two types of barriers to date; that of employing young people on their own employability apprenticeship programme and that of barriers around engaging with the full LSC Apprenticeship.

Additional personal and social development needs of apprentices

The Hoxton Apprentice employs those who, for one reason or another, have ‘found life tough’. Some may have left school without formal qualifications, some may have experienced homelessness and some may be currently living in hostel accommodation – all however, will have been unemployed for at least six months. This means that the Hoxton Apprentice’s trainees often require additional support as they have “complex problems that can interfere with their ability to move into employment”. The Managing Director of Training for Life continues to explain: “We hesitate to take them straight through to the commercial environment of the restaurant which is why we put them on the two month precursor programme.”

For those successful enough to progress on to the Hoxton Apprentice’s employability apprenticeship programme, the support continues as explained by the manager of the restaurant: “We tend to also buddy them up with someone that can give them some support. It’s the support and encouragement they might not want from a manager. It could be an apprentice if they’ve got someone they get on really well with, or it could be a different manager or supervisor or one of the head office team.”

Experience has shown that staff often have to persevere with their trainees to fully develop the skills they need to work in a commercial restaurant. The Hoxton Apprentice’s Manager explains her own experience: “You’ve got to have patience and you may have to go over old ground. It’s making sure that you have the right team, professional team, to cope with that.”

To further support their trainees and remove potential barriers, the Hoxton Apprentice provides onsite facilities for their IT training as many can not easily access a computer or internet connection to complete their coursework. The Manager of the Hoxton Apprentice explains: “We’ve got an IT suite in the Hoxton Apprentice, about ten computers. In Dartmouth we’re just raising some funds for a training room that’s sponsored...our fundraisers are looking at getting funding for four PCs there...They can do their online learning as well and their exams.”

Overall, the Manager explains that despite the challenges they face, they are outweighed by the benefits: “I mean it’s challenging running a restaurant with regular staff. I suppose it would be slightly more challenging [with our trainees] but the results and reward are far greater. It’s not just some actress coming in to do a few shifts in the restaurant, these people want it as their career.”

The additional support required by their trainees is a current challenge to the Hoxton Apprentice on their precursor and employability apprenticeship programmes. If the Hoxton Apprentice moves to the full LSC Apprenticeship programme these issues will still exist as their mission is to be a ‘training restaurant for unemployed people’.
Changes to their own employability apprenticeship programme

The Hoxton Apprentice is currently considering the LSC full Apprenticeship programme to replace its own six month employability apprenticeship. To do this will require a number of changes to their current funding structure and to the format of the programme, such as the length of time it takes to complete it.

The Hoxton Apprentice has calculated the cost of their current programme, as explained by the Managing Director of Training for Life: “We have worked out that it costs us approximately £10,000 to support an apprentice for six months within the restaurant and two months on this precursor program. That includes their minimum wage salary when they’re in receipt of it. In the past, we have gained that money from a variety of sources; trust funds, foundations, industry, and on one occasion contributions from LSC European Social Funding (ESF).

The six month employability apprenticeship includes an NVQ Level 2 which is currently funded through Train to Gain as explained by the Managing Director: “We are reliant on Train to Gain funding for the training element of our six month apprenticeship. If we were to lose that, we would struggle to find another source to actually support the NVQ work with them.”

Moving to the LSC Apprenticeship programme would not allow the Hoxton Apprentice to fund the programme the way it currently does and the LSC Apprenticeship funding would not meet the total needed for the full programme. To address this they are looking at all the options, as explained by the Managing Director of Training for Life: “What we are looking at if we do decide to move the apprenticeship program onto the LSC Apprenticeship framework is what elements of the apprenticeship program could we reasonably do in the precursor program. This will get them out of the way so they would not have to be built into the six month placement in the restaurant afterwards. What the colleges are advising us is that there are some aspects of what are ‘key skills’ that we probably could legitimately do in the precursor element. That’s what we’re talking to colleges about at the moment so that they can enable us to access LSC funding for the programme. This is the best way of doing it to see what can be done to pull down some LSC funding.”

In addition to the funding element are the fundamental changes to the programme needed to meet the LSC Apprenticeship framework requirements. The Managing Director of Training for Life explains the impact of these changes:

“We’re going to have to extend the period of time that the apprentices are with us. Although, as we don’t align with academic years, it does look as though we may only have to grow to nine months to actually match what appears to be the LSC requirement for the volume of work that has to be covered. The other thing we’re going to have to look at is whether we can match the requirement for the non job specific training, the key skills. For us, we are taking on people who struggle with academic learning. If we put them back into an environment where they have failed in the past we may lose them.”

“The other thing that would have to change is that the charity would have to retain ownership of the apprentices when they’re in the restaurant; if we were doing the LSC Apprenticeship programme. At the moment, they become employees of the restaurant [at the start of the employability apprenticeship] and their experience is comparable to any other employee in the restaurant.”

The Managing Director adds: “At the moment, we would put through about 30 plus apprentices a year. That’s two cohorts of six months. [With the LSC programme] we would immediately halve the numbers that we were dealing with, so rather than having 30 doing six months each, we would have 15 doing twelve months. From our point of view that’s the biggest single thing that we’re battling with; the fact that we will have to deal with fewer people when in fact, there is a need for much more of this work based provision and certainly not less.”
The Hoxton Apprentice is currently working with a number of local further education colleges, specialists in hospitality, and the LSC to fully explore the options and impacts of moving to the LSC Apprenticeship programme.

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Rathbone
Third Sector Apprenticeship employer and provider

Introduction

Rathbone is a UK-wide Third Sector organisation, providing opportunities for young people to transform their life circumstances by: re-engaging with learning; discovering their ability to succeed; and achieving progression to further education, training and employment. Each year, Rathbone engages with over 15,000 young people who join their programmes, delivered from 70 centres across England, Scotland and Wales.

Rathbone’s philosophy and approach to working with young people is that everyone, whatever their starting point in life, can make progress through learning. They work on the basis of mutual respect; supporting, encouraging and challenging young people to make the best of themselves.

As a training provider they offer programmes such as entry2employment (e2e) and Apprenticeships. In 2006/07, Rathbone supported over 2,000 young people through employer based Apprenticeships; 71% of the apprentices progressed into work or further education and training, at the end of the programme.

In addition to their work as a training provider, Rathbone also employ apprentices when the business need arises. Rathbone currently has two apprentices based in their Coventry centre and one in its Sandwell centre; all taking the Business Administration framework.

### At a glance

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<td>Location</td>
<td>National, apprentices currently based in Coventry (2) and Sandwell (1)</td>
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Rathbone
Third Sector Apprenticeship employer and provider
Successes

Making the business case for apprentices

As a Third Sector organisation, employing apprentices within their own organisation was a natural response to a business need. Director for Youth Training at Rathbone explains: “The reason we take on apprentices is two fold. Firstly we are in the business of helping young people so why wouldn’t we take on our own young people. Secondly, all of the business benefit reasons that we would talk to employers about. So we believe that those who you train are more productive, stay with the business longer, are more loyal, and can make a real contribution to the organisation - apprentices make good employees.”

The process of putting together a business case involves outlining the rationale for each potential Apprenticeship place. The business case is prepared by staff members in the department and is considered by a panel at an area team meeting. Rathbone’s West Midlands Area Manager details what is involved: “The business case is the rationale for wanting to move forward. You’ve got rationale behind why you want to develop an Apprenticeship, the financial implications of that development and the threats, risks, opportunities that sort of thing. It’s really a full assessment of why we are embarking on that particular route.”

To prepare this, Rathbone’s staff need a thorough understanding of what Apprenticeships can offer to ensure they are able to persuade others of the benefits. This understanding is often developed through the organisation’s work as a provider.

Apprentices’ progression to employment

It is Rathbone’s aim to offer employer-led Apprenticeships to the apprentices and to employ them after they have completed their qualification.

Rathbone considers its role to be not just of providing an Apprenticeship, but to ensure that their apprentices gain transferable skills that will benefit them in future careers. Rathbone currently uses established Apprenticeship frameworks to guarantee their apprentices develop transferable skills and are trained for an industry such as Business Administration. The Director for Youth Training at Rathbone further explains: “We consider an Apprenticeship not just to train them for the job role they are doing today but to make that a career into the future. Apprenticeships include transferable skills such that you are then trained for the industry and not for a narrow job role.”

Rathbone currently only offers the Business Administration framework to its staff, but its work also covers the areas of: finance, youth work and customer service; these may be offered as Apprenticeships in the future if needed.

Barriers and solutions

Apprentices lack of work experience

Rathbone has found that the previous lack of work experience of their apprentices can pose challenges. The majority of their apprentices have joined the programme after deciding that college was not for them. This naturally attracts individuals with little, or no, work experience especially in an office environment, which can cause problems when they enter Rathbone as an employee.

To ensure apprentices are introduced to the work environment correctly, Rathbone ensures that new apprentices have a structured induction programme which covers them both as a learner and as a Rathbone employee. This includes information about the role and any rules and regulations such as the importance of confidentiality.
The apprentices that Rathbone employ value the on-the-job training as they progress, as explained by one apprentice: “All the training I needed I have got and if I asked for something they have given it to me. If I don’t know how to do something they come and show me how to do it.”

They further describe the basic office skills they have gained: “I have lots of new skills since I have been here. I know how to do double sided on the printer and have found stuff on the computer — I didn’t know how to answer a telephone when I first came here and I do now!”

Apprentices’ personal, learning and social needs

As Rathbone employs young apprentices that are disadvantaged and facing barriers to learning; Rathbone often encounter challenges with their additional needs that are: personal, learning and social in nature. Rathbone’s Director for Youth Training explains: “We take the risk of working with vulnerable young people on the basis that they are our core clients.”

The multiple barriers to employment that the young people face means that Rathbone are often stretched more than most in meeting their completion and retention targets. The Director for Youth Training explains: “For Rathbone, who work primarily with the hardest to help, there should be recognition that we take a chance on someone who might not have a history of following things through.”

Rathbone has found that their apprentices need an extra level of support to maintain their interest, motivate them and help them achieve their potential. Rathbone provides this by building on their expertise and wider work of engaging and understanding young people. They apply good practice from their experience of providing programme-led Apprenticeships and other programmes to other employers.

Part of this additional support involves Rathbone’s staff being approachable and getting to know the apprentices individually. Knowing that someone is looking out for them is important to the apprentices as one apprentice explains: “I like the admin team, they have really helped me. Because if I didn’t have my mentor and all the other people around me I don’t think I would have been able to do it. People that I know that can help me, really helped me stick with it.”

Each apprentice is provided with a mentor who they work with throughout their development. They understand that the apprentice’s enthusiasm needs to be channelled; working closely with them helps develop a good work ethic and other basic skills such as timekeeping. An apprentice explains an aspect of their progress through the programme: “I had to fill in a SWOT analysis at the beginning of the Apprenticeship and you have to put in your weaknesses and improve on them...I worked on them and then at the end my weaknesses are now my strengths...they have helped me to improve on them. Confidence was one of my biggest weaknesses at the start and I am fine now.”

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Introduction

The South London Learning Consortium (SLLC) is a Third Sector learning and skills consortium. Established in 2005, SLLC operates as the trading arm of the South London Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) Partnership. This partnership is a registered Charity constituted from and representing all six South London Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs).

The SLLC comprises 140 Voluntary and Community Sector members in the South London area, including training providers and Third Sector organisations. The SLLC delivers learning and skills programmes themselves, and secures and manages learning and skills contracts which are then delivered by its members. One third of the SLLC members are also partner providers having successfully passed the quality assurance process.

In 2008, the SLLC was awarded a contract from the Learning and Skills Council to deliver Apprenticeships in the Third Sector, the aim of which is to increase the take up of Apprenticeships in South London’s Third Sector. The SLLC works with approximately 400 employers, 140 of which are in the Third Sector and offers Apprenticeships both itself and through its partner providers. The SLLC’s Apprenticeship programme will run initially from 2008 until August 2010, during which time SLLC has committed to offer 50 apprentices and to ensure a minimum of 35 Apprenticeship completions. Since the staff team at SLLC have been involved in Apprenticeships, two employees have undertaken an Apprenticeship themselves to aid their own personal development, one in Management and the other in Business Administration.
Successes

Consortium approach to reach the most disadvantaged learners in South London

The SLLC is located in South London where there are a high proportion of BME communities. The SLLC’s mission is to “develop a representative strategic learning consortium that is rooted in London’s communities and which provides quality learning opportunities through Voluntary and Community provider partnerships”. Two of the main business aims of the SLLC relate to the targeting of their provision, these are to: “work collaboratively to support the transition of hard to reach learners into mainstream provision (achievement and retention)” and “to promote the effectiveness of learning to reflect diverse communities”.

The SLLC works to collaboratively support the transition of the most hard to reach learners into mainstream provision and places emphasis upon achievement and progression. SLLC works with individual learners prior to them embarking on an any learning of training programme, this support is offered either directly or through its member organisations, to date the SLLC has “delivered 439 information, advice and guidance (IAG) sessions to south London residents. These sessions are designed to support individuals make the right moves in their careers or help them find the next step in their education or job search”.

It is too early in the SLLC Apprenticeship programme to review the completion rates or to provide data on the profile of apprentices recruited, but the Chief Executive of the SLLC describes how he believes they reach the most disadvantaged learners “more than that which is standard for training providers and FE locally”. SLLC attribute this to their effective linkages with other learning and support agencies and community focused initiatives. This is supported by the statistics from SLLC’s 2007-08 Annual Report which suggested that “SLLC again proved its reached right into South London’s Communities as 60% of the projects learners were from the BME communities and 44% had a declared disability”.

Growing the workforce of the future by offering Apprenticeships to their employees

The SLLC support their employees’ personal development and are committed to ensuring everyone within their organisation fulfils their potential. This is demonstrated by the SLLC’s Chief Executive: “From a personal, and from an organisational, point of view we want our staff to be as well trained as possible. If our staff are better trained they serve our members and our employers better.”

The SLLC identified a training need in two members of their administration team and are focusing on up-skilling these employees through and Apprenticeship and an Advanced Apprenticeship. As 80 percent of the SLLC workforce is over the age of 25, the SLLC were reliant on the availability of the Adult Apprenticeship programme. Ensuring the workforce has new higher level skills will ‘future proof’ the SLLC. The benefits of the Apprenticeship training is already being seen, the administration team have expanded their knowledge and confidence; which is essential if SLLC are to consistently deliver a quality service for the Third Sector, in a competitive London market. The SLLC’s Chief Executive describes how this will help the organisation to achieve its aims: “Because they’re on a prescribed and dedicated programme of training [Apprenticeships] I can now have higher expectations of them as employees. I can also push them and expand their skills, knowledge and experience so that they are stronger, more dedicated, more flexible and better employees. They can help us achieve our aims.”

This internal ‘recruitment’ has eliminated advertising and recruitment costs and has ensured that individuals are dedicated and committed to the organisation before a financial commitment is made. The individuals involved are delighted to become apprentices, and most importantly they feel confident in their work and part of the SLLCs future plans for growth. The SLLC anticipate that Apprenticeships will also increase their staff retention and productivity; benefits that would be similar for all Third Sector employers.

Based on the success of their programmes to date, SLLC are considering additional Business Administration Apprenticeships for the organisation. This will be dependant upon the outcome of a review of the future training needs of SLLC’s existing staff, which will determine whether Apprenticeships are appropriate.

Barriers and solutions

As a consortium that facilitates Third Sector employer engagement with Apprenticeships and other learning programmes, SLLC have an advanced understanding of the potential barriers employers face in engaging with Apprenticeships. In developing their own Apprenticeship offer for their own employees, SLLC have therefore avoided a number of common barriers for the consortium.

Misconceptions about Apprenticeships amongst consortium members

The SLLC have found that there is a low level of awareness of how Apprenticeships work within the Third Sector. Misconceptions of the Apprenticeship programme have led to the feeling that the programme is not flexible enough to work with the demands of the Third Sector. This lack of knowledge is based on the low numbers of Third Sector employers currently engaged with Apprenticeships with recent publicity, such as television advertising, has been focused on the more ‘traditional’ industries such as manufacturing and construction. This point is highlighted by the SLLC’s Chief Executive: “Most of our members don’t know about Apprenticeships or they see Sir Alan Sugar on the TV, talking about youngsters all the time and car mechanics and those kind of things. Actually if it was marketed differently there would be a lot higher uptake [from the Third Sector]. It’s really about [the programmes] being fit for purpose.”

As a Third Sector employer themselves, with a consortium of over one hundred Third Sector organisations, the SLLC feels it is delivering a ground breaking model and working towards ‘establishing Apprenticeships in the Third Sector’. It does this through leading by example through employing their own apprentices and sharing best practice with their members, partner providers and employers.

SLLC believe that the solution to overcoming misconceptions about Apprenticeships is to ensure they are well marketed to the Third Sector and are fit for purpose. The Chief Executive of SLLC feels that there needs to be a “concentrated advertising campaign about adult Apprenticeships, rather than the Alan Sugar one, which is all about young apprentices”. He also recognises that Apprenticeships have yet to be marketed to the Third Sector and that there isn’t currently the “kind of, weight or support” for them in this sector yet, as they are not considered a traditional route in the same way they are for “engineers, [or] construction”. Nevertheless SLLC have made great initial progress and are confident that they will have the majority of the Apprenticeships they need recruited before the end of the first year of the programme.

Consortium model overcomes capacity constraints of Third Sector organisations

The SLLC was established to create a “sustainable Third Sector consortium for South London and to capacity build sector organisations to deliver learning and skills contracts”. It uses this consortium structure to “sub-contract accredited learning using Third Sector training providers under mainstream FE [Further Education] conditions”.

According to the Chief Executive of the SLLC, until the creation of the consortia, Third Sector organisations in South London had “never been able to access mainstream contracts” due to the limitations of sub-contractual arrangements with FE Colleges. The SLLC deals with each members request to become a partner provider individually and if a member is not ready, they work with them to ensure they become contract ready. SLLC trains potential providers to deal with the “nitty gritty” of contract delivery, for example training them in “how to write individual learning plans on a quarterly basis”. Members of the SLLC describe it as “invaluable as a support mechanism” and describe notable benefits including: “access to mainstream funding, training, and
peer mentoring”. It enables members to meet the requirements and responsibilities of becoming a partner provider and assists them to develop management and quality systems necessary to deliver training.

SLLC also supports its Third Sector employers by ensuring that training is conducted on their premises and that it is responsive to their needs guaranteeing that they will “make the programme fit to the learners and the employers needs”. SLLC recognises that many Third Sector employers do not have HR or Training Departments, or the resources to establish such infrastructure; the SLLC therefore support its Third Sector employers to engage with Apprenticeships through its consortium approach by managing the recruitment of apprentices.

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Introduction

Established in 1985, S&D Training have developed a reputation for high quality, Third Sector training provision for the long-term unemployed. The administration team at S&D Training are at the heart of everything they do, liaising with trainers, learners and supporting assessors who manage up to 20 learners at a time.

The expansion of their administration department prompted S&D Training to employ apprentices to support their training delivery in the North East. Approximately one third of S&D Training’s staff have come through Apprenticeships and they are therefore embedded within the culture of the organisation. S&D Training understand the benefits of training people within the company and embedding a solid work ethic as part of this. This is explained by the Chief Executive of S&D Training: “The senior management team seemed very positive about Apprenticeships, positive about bringing them to a certain standard but also by developing learners they could mould themselves.”

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Successes

Addressing the wider barriers of the long-term unemployed

S&D Training work primarily with the long-term unemployed, so feel it is only right to employ their own client group within the organisation when appropriate. The move to employment can be challenging for those who have been unemployed, or economically inactive, for a long period of time (over 6 months). Through their experience, S&D Training understand there are likely to be many social factors affecting their return to work, and learning, such as poor finances, childcare issues and a lack of confidence.

For apprentices in particular these barriers need to be understood as the minimum Apprenticeship wage of £80 a week is often insufficient to cover costs associated with work such as travel; a key issue for apprentices at S&D Training due to their rural location. The Chief Executive of S&D Training explains this further: “Apprentices find that the £80 a week is not enough and because we live in quite a rural area they're travelling large distances. So, that £80 just isn't sufficient to cover travelling costs, let alone anything else.”

To minimise the affects of these barriers, S&D Training offer additional services to their apprentices. One service is a free bus provided by S&D Training, which picks apprentices up from 18 locations across County Durham and takes them to work. S&D also signpost their apprentices to the free childcare available for learners enrolled on LSC funded training. In addition, they also supplement apprentice’s wages and ensure that they are paid in line with non-apprentices in the same business administration department.

It is through this support that S&D Training ensures that everything possible is done to encourage the apprentices they employ to complete their programme. S&D Training has found that the enhanced wages and bus service which they offer, along with signposting to childcare, have increased rates of attendance, achievement and minimised drop out rates.

Valuing transferable skills

S&D Training is based in a deprived area and regularly recruits apprentices from locally declining industries. The individuals recruited in this way bring with them a number of transferable skills which they have gained in previous employment. S&D Training work with the individuals to identify these skills and where they can be of most benefit to the organisation.

Often the transferable skills are not clearly linked to their work at S&D Training but are valuable nonetheless. The Chief Executive of S&D Training explains one particular experience: “The North East used to be quite big in manufacturing in this area but a number of companies in the area closed down seven years ago. We recognise the transferable skills that some of those people have, and we now have two girls in the office that used to be machinists and they're excellent. They are very methodical in the way they work, and I like that. It’s amazing how transferable their skills are.”

Barriers and solutions

Supplementing the Business Administration Apprenticeship with additional in house training

S&D Training have worked with apprentices for over 24 years, and consider themselves to be experts in employing apprentices and meeting the requirements of the framework. Whilst Apprenticeships provide important vocational learning, S&D Training feel that delivering only the bare minimum of the framework often fails to provide ‘the best’ apprentices, with many lacking essential office skills.
The Chief Executive explains her concerns: “I know how I was taught when I was younger and there were just certain things that were always instilled. You know, the layout of documents, silly things like don't let the phone ring more than three times before you answer it and the way that you answer it. I sometimes don't think that that those things are coming out in the Apprenticeship Programme because x number of people are placed on to an Apprenticeship and they're just being assessed on the work that they're doing, not what they should be doing.”

To fill these skills gaps, S&D Training offer additional training providing the opportunity for apprentices to be trained by S&D Training ‘in their way’ moulding them to the organisation. An example of this additional support includes communication skills and increased confidence, again explained here by S&D Training’s Chief Executive: “The Business Administration framework has communication and key skills, but it’s not communication as we would understand communication. At Level 2, apprentices do a bit of a presentation but even that is very basic and only lasts a couple of minutes. The way we tend to do it here is usually over several sessions, they will give a range of presentations to their peers and colleagues, so it is quite relaxing and informal.”

A lack of higher level skills within the organisation

S&D Training have in the past struggled to find highly qualified staff for their organisation that can drive the business forward. A lot of S&D Training’s energy has gone in to training lower level staff leaving little resource for training at higher levels.

Higher level skills such as idea generation, effective leadership and time management are recognised by S&D Training as ways to steer the growth of the organisation and improve standards. This is especially relevant in the current tough economic climate when the long-term unemployed, their core client base, is likely to increase.

To address the lack of higher level skills and drive new energy through the organisation, S&D Training have engaged with Advanced Apprenticeships at Level 3 for a number of their staff including three of their training coordinators. S&D Training also plan to use Advanced Apprenticeships in Business Administration and Management in the future to meet their expected increase in customer demand.

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Introduction

The Parks Trust is an independent charity that cares for many of Milton Keynes’ parks and green spaces. The Parks Trust established a pilot Apprenticeship scheme to respond to local skills shortages in land management and horticulture, with funding from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). The pilot Apprenticeship scheme ran from December 2006 until March 2008 and The Parks Trust worked in partnership with four local employers. The aim of the pilot was to help maintain parks and green spaces and attract young people into landscape management.

The SEEDA funded pilot was a success with six of the seven apprentices recruited in December 2007 going on to secure full-time work; five of these with the employers who hosted them during the Apprenticeship scheme. Valuable lessons were also learnt and documented in the evaluation of the scheme. The Parks Trust is currently offering informal apprenticeships to three of their staff whilst they address some of the challenges faced during the Apprenticeship pilot, such as: apprentices’ attendance at college and the additional support required for apprentices with complex social and personal development needs. They remain committed to delivering formal Apprenticeships and are currently scoping appropriate environmental training and learning provision to enable them to offer formal Apprenticeships in the future without the SEEDA funding.
Successes

Apprentices’ work experience and progression to employment

Six of the seven apprentices that The Parks Trust recruited in December 2007 went on to secure full-time work, five of these with the employers who hosted them during the Apprenticeship scheme. The Parks Trust works with over 30 employers which employ over 100 individuals. Four of these employers expressed an interest in taking on an apprentice as part of the pilot Apprenticeships scheme and a willingness to pay half of the apprentice’s salary. One employer’s enthusiasm for Apprenticeships clearly stemmed from the volume of work they had at the time “I’ve had to pass work on to companies from outside Milton Keynes because I can’t meet the demand. If there were 6 guys good enough for the job I’d take them on today”. The local employers experienced difficulties in recruiting new staff, which they attributed to perceptions of horticulture and land management as a career “lacking in progression opportunities”. Given the current recession The Parks Trust believes that they would find it more difficult to persuade the employers they work with to take on apprentices now as is explained by the Community Team Manager at The Parks Trust: “If I am really honest one of the biggest barriers [now] is encouraging the employers to give the apprentices work experience”. The Parks Trust believes that at present, if the employers need to recruit, they want people who are already fully trained.

The success of the pilot scheme is described by The Parks Trust Project Manager, with regards to one particular apprentice: “Yes there were ups and downs along the way, but there was this one particular lad, and when he first started he couldn’t even talk to me, you couldn’t get a sentence out of him, but by the time he’d finished he’d got a job, he’d got lots of qualifications and he was confident”. The Parks Trust scheme was certainly a success as nearly all of the apprentice’s secured paid employment as a result of their Apprenticeship.

Commitment to develop an effective Apprenticeship model

One year on from the completion of the pilot, The Parks Trust consider it a success as it allowed them to identify the right model for the future training of the landscape horticultural workforce in Milton Keynes. A key success of the pilot has been helping local providers, such as Milton Keynes College, to recognise the need for horticultural provision in Milton Keynes. They are now considering how they can address the challenges they faced in the pilot scheme.

They have continued to explore Apprenticeship models and currently offer ‘in-house’ apprenticeship style training. They currently employ trainees for up to one year who work and train on site. To take forward a full Apprenticeship programme The Parks Trust recognise that developing local provision is crucial. They are working with Milton Keynes College to scope an Apprenticeship scheme and develop horticulture curriculum and provision. The initial SEEDA funding for the pilot enabled The Parks Trust to run an Apprenticeship programme that they weren’t able to sustain. Scoping sustainable funding models is a crucial aspect of the development work they now need to do.

Barriers and solutions

Finding appropriate provision locally

The Parks Trust developed a partnership with Moulton Agricultural College to deliver the academic qualifications as part of the pilot Apprenticeships scheme; this included the NVQ in amenity horticulture and production horticulture, as well as basic skills. The evaluation of the pilot scheme identified a need for the college to dedicate more attention to meeting the apprentices’ needs by ensuring that the provision was more
tailored, flexible and exciting. The syllabus needed to be tailored to the work the apprentices were undertaking with their employers and training needed to be more varied, as tasks were often monotonous.

Moulton College, as the nearest appropriate provider was 23 miles away, over an hour by car. This deterred most of the apprentices on the pilot scheme from attending. The Parks Trust felt many of the apprentices weren’t ready to go straight to college when they first joined the scheme, and the travel to Moulton College from Milton Keynes exacerbated this. The evaluation of the Parks Trust pilot Apprenticeship scheme states that “the academic part of the scheme proved to be a persistent difficulty for all involved”. The Parks Trust Project Manager explained in their evaluation that: “Poor attendance could have been because of the distance to Moulton College. They had to get a bus although one of them drove. If he didn’t go then the other two wouldn’t go. There were problems with bus passes; they were supposed to renew them each week. If they didn’t have the right pass the bus drivers wouldn’t let them on.”

A potential solution to address the distance of the provider from The Parks Trust would have been for Moulton College to offer on-site training at The Parks Trust. However, to deliver in this way Moulton College would have required a larger cohort of apprentices than those recruited to the pilot programme. The Parks Trust is currently scoping alternative local training provision.

**Apprentices’ personal and social development needs**

The aspiration of the pilot was to work with young people from some of the most deprived areas in Milton Keynes. The Apprentices were recruited through Connexions, Jobcentre Plus and partner organisations in the local area. The Parks Trust was praised by the employers for enabling them to be involved in the recruitment of the apprentices including interviews and selection. However, once the scheme began, working with apprentices who faced challenging personal circumstances was identified as a barrier as they required a lot of additional support. The Project Manager at The Parks Trust recalls that many of the apprentices in the pilot had a tendency to “bunk off for the day” leaving employers in the lurch. The Parks Trust sought to overcome this challenge by ensuring that the apprentices were supported by a landscape officer who had experience of working with, and mentoring, young people.

The Parks Trust believes that the time restraints of the project impacted upon its successful delivery, “we needed more time to build the relationships. Two years could have made all the difference to some of them”. The original intention was to run the pilot scheme over two years, but funding restrictions meant the apprentices only had 12 months to complete their Apprenticeships. A full-time project manager was not appointed due to a lack of funding; for The Parks Trust this meant that “a number of people were managing this project on top of the work that they already had to deliver”, they believe that “young people and the project as a whole suffered because of this”. Ensuring there were full-time posts dedicated to the support of young apprentices would ensure apprentice’s needs were met.

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Introduction

The Sage Gateshead is a non-for-profit live music venue and a centre for education in the North of England; established in 2004 it has been described as the “the most exciting music venue in Britain”¹. The Sage Gateshead is also leading a “unique new Creative Apprenticeship programme being delivered by a consortium of twelve of the top creative organisations in the North East [Gateshead Newcastle Arts Forum], in partnership with Gateshead College”.

The Learning and Skills Council are funding the Creative Apprenticeship training and Gateshead College manages this contract. The Sage Gateshead is the lead organisation for the Gateshead Newcastle Arts Forum Consortium with responsibility for delivering 50 Creative Apprenticeships over three years. To date, the Creative Apprenticeship programme has recruited 12 apprentices (approximately 43 per cent of all Creative Apprentices in England); their aim is to recruit a further 25 apprentices during 2009, leaving the remaining 13 apprentices to be recruited during 2010.

The Creative Apprenticeship programme in the North East is part of a wider nationwide scheme led by Creative & Cultural Skills. Prior to the Creative Apprenticeship programme The Sage Gateshead employed trainees on informal apprenticeships to work in its education and music delivery departments. It was the Sage Gateshead’s experience in offering informal apprenticeships which led them to become instrumental in the development of the Creative Apprenticeship framework led by Creative & Cultural Skills. The Sage Gateshead was involved in the development of the Creative Apprenticeship including: the prototyping and the piloting, prior to their official launch in September 2008.

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¹ The Times September 2006
**Successes**

**Promoting Apprenticeships through a consortium approach**

Through the development of the Creative Apprenticeship framework and their consortium approach, The Sage Gateshead has been involved in wide consultation with employers of all sizes across the region. The Sage Gateshead has promoted Creative Apprenticeships as widely as possible on behalf of the programme and the Gateshead Newcastle Arts Forum Consortium. The Head of Practitioner Development at The Sage Gateshead works with employers on a one-to-one basis, runs road shows, and attends meetings with organisations such as the Northumberlander Strategic Partnership to explore development opportunities.

The Sage Gateshead’s understanding of the sector led them to recognise that the knowledge and expertise required to deliver the Creative Apprenticeship lay within the sector itself, and not with further education providers. This innovative approach sees The Sage Gateshead delivering the Apprenticeship training whilst Gateshead College manage the LSC contract including: quality assurance and site visits. The Head of Practitioner Development at The Sage Gateshead explains their approach: “We decided that the knowledge and expertise to deliver a Creative Apprenticeship lay within the sector and not within an FE College. Gateshead College is going to quality assure and manage the contract and we are actually going to deliver the programme. In order to do that, obviously, we have lots of work to do because we have to look at how we embed that into our own kind of staffing structures. For example, we need a percentage of staff that have qualified teacher status.” Those employed by The Sage Gateshead, who have been up-skilled to qualified teacher status, offer a training day once a month for all apprentices taking part in the Creative Apprenticeship. The training day focuses on Creative and Cultural skills, such as event organisation and how to manage projects.

**Diversifying the Creative and Cultural workforce in the North East**

The North East as a region had previously identified the need to diversify the workforce within the Creative and Cultural Sector. Traditionally the sector is comprised of graduates therefore The Sage Gateshead is interested in diversifying the workforce with entrants at Level 2 and Level 3 through Apprenticeships. The Head of Practitioner Development further explains: “We had already identified that the region wanted to diversify its workforce because traditionally the creative and cultural workforce is made up of people who are graduates... for people who are not graduates, the key success of our programme is providing employment opportunities for a wider range of people.”

The benefits of running this LSC funded programme are outlined by the Head of Practitioner Development at The Sage Gateshead: “The reason that we became extremely committed to piloting Creative Apprenticeships with the Learning and Skills Council was because we realised that we were doing something with our informal Apprenticeships that was very different. The Creative Apprenticeship meant we would be able to deliver Level 2 and 3 qualifications. We identified that the cultural sector in our region wanted to diversify its workforce because traditionally the Creative and Cultural workforce is made up of people who are graduates.” Fulfilling this aim has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the Creative Apprenticeship programme, as the Head of Practitioner Development at The Sage Gateshead explains: “It has also been great to provide opportunities for people in a wide range of communities across the North East and diversify the workforce”.

The Sage Gateshead is looking forward to developing the Creative Apprenticeships programme further. Their future plans are described by their Head of Practitioner Development as follows: “What we know is, we want Creative Apprenticeships right across the region. We want everybody to be able to have a say, we want it to be as inclusive as possible. We don’t want it to look like, ‘oh, there’s the really big organisation doing this for us’. We want to be as inclusive of SMEs and micro-organisations as we can possibly be, and we want to evolve to do it together because that’s how we work.” They are working with the consortium and other partners to
consider an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) and or a Group Training Association (GTA) model. Work is currently underway to employ an apprentice to share between three similar micro-employers, a model similar to that of the ATA. Interest in a GTA has been shown by Northumberland Strategic Partnership and the Arts Council.

**Barriers and solutions**

**Capacity to engage and financial constraints**

The Sage Gateshead has had to overcome capacity and financial barriers of delivering Creative Apprenticeships. Putting the necessary infrastructure in place, recruiting apprentices to take part and securing commitment from the senior management team has been extremely resource intensive. The Sage Gateshead has recruited a part-time assessor and part-time manager to run the programme. The Sage Gateshead has financially supplemented the Apprenticeship programme by using its own funds to support the new positions and is heavily supported by Gateshead College.

The Creative Apprenticeship Programme remains under-resourced, making it extremely difficult to sustain. The partners recognise the need to make the business model of the Creative Apprenticeship Programme work in order for it to continue and to secure its future. One development which is being considered by the Gateshead Newcastle Arts Forum Consortium is that of a Group Training Association, which would spread the financial responsibility of the programme more widely.

**Breaking down the barriers felt by employers**

The consortium approach has enabled The Sage Gateshead to develop a deep understanding of Third Sector organisations needs, and has highlighted a number of commonly experienced barriers including a lack of: capacity and infrastructure; funding to pay an apprentices wage; and time required to recruit employ an apprentice. Many organisations had not previously taken on trainees or apprentices and have therefore not experienced first-hand the benefits that they can bring to an organisation.

A common complaint from many employers is that Apprenticeship frameworks are not responsive to their needs. This barrier, along with a lack of understanding of the benefits apprentices bring to the organisation, have accounted for the low take-up and even lower completion rates of many Apprenticeship frameworks. The Sage Gateshead has addressed this by listening and responding to employers concerns, yet this can be challenging as the Head of Practitioner Development at The Sage Gateshead explains: “How do you get employers to invest in wages for apprentices, especially in a recession, when they haven’t experienced the benefits, the massive benefits that Apprenticeships bring the individuals and organisations?”. 

The Sage Gateshead and the Creative Apprenticeship programme have addressed this by offering responsive solutions to employers and have tried to develop their understanding of Apprenticeships. The Sage Gateshead works with employers on a one-to-one basis and find that they “have to do an advocacy job” focused on demonstrating the benefits. The Head of Practitioner Development at The Sage Gateshead explains this further: “We have done road shows and we’re just about to do another one. We’ve identified particular geographical areas and venues, and we’ve gone to those places and sat with employers round the table. We’ve explained and they’ve asked questions. We’ve listened to what their needs are and we’ve changed what we do according to what they need. We’re working with people on a one-to-one basis so we’ve gone back out and had individual meetings with those employers.”

The delivery model of the Creative Apprenticeship programme aims to minimise the barriers felt by employers through the recruitment process, and to highlight the benefits of increased productivity and cascading knowledge. The partnership approach taken is crucial as the Head of Practitioner development at the stage
suggests: “You know, to have this kind of learning partnership with Gateshead College, doing all of it together, hand in hand has been completely amazing.” It is also demonstrated by The Sage Gateshead employing two of which are seconded to The Customs House an arts centre in the region.

These benefits to employers are in addition to the new vocational skills that the apprentices bring to the Creative and Cultural Sector in the North East. The Head of Practitioner Development highlights other benefits: “You end up with a workforce that are very highly skilled, they're very passionate, they're extremely committed, they're very innovative, they bring new ideas, but we knew that already and we wanted more of that.” The consortium believe that the notable benefit of a Creative Apprenticeship is that apprentices can work in any part of the Creative and Cultural Sector, and receive an underpinning knowledge of sector-specific skills that they can apply to any role in the industry.

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Introduction

The Voluntary Sector Training Alliance (ViSTA) is coordinating an Apprenticeship Scheme over a three year period (2007-2010) which is funded from the Treasury’s ‘Invest to Save Budget’ (ISB). The Invest to Save funding enables ViSTA to employ and fund the salary costs for 34 apprentices, who are then hosted by Third Sector employers. The scheme aims to build the capacity of the Third Sector to enable them to engage in work-based learning and Apprenticeships. It is expected that it will also lead to further investment by Third Sector employers in addressing staff needs and skills shortages, as emphasised by ViSTAs Chief Executive: “we want them to host more apprentices, but we also want them to buy into learning and development for their other staff”.

In just two years ViSTA has worked with 17 Third Sector employers to offer 25 Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships across Somerset. ViSTA has piloted an innovative approach by employing the apprentices and also providing brokerage support to learners, providers and employers. Their services have been widely used, with the majority (93%) of apprentices in all Third Sector organisations in Somerset resulting from the ViSTA scheme.
Successes

The brokerage and recruitment model

As a brokerage organisation ViSTA manages the relationships between the employer hosts, the Apprentice and the training provider; delivering dedicated advice and support to all throughout the Apprenticeship. This involves ViSTA ‘interpreting’ policies and information from the provider for their host employers. Through understanding the context of their Third Sector employers, ViSTA takes into account issues such as the timing of assessments, funding and resourcing constraints and liaises with the training provider to ensure the host employer’s needs are met. An example of this is ViSTA converting the requirements of a specific Apprenticeship framework into a yearly timetable for host employers, in conjunction with the provider, which enables host employers to factor key stages, such as assessments, into work planning for the apprentice.

ViSTA also goes beyond simply advertising Apprenticeship placements - its uniqueness lies in its comprehensive brokerage model and offering a service to both the learner and the employer. Often, learning providers will focus their attention on the learner without a true understanding of the employer’s needs. The matching of individuals to specific employers is also of importance to successful placements. Therefore, once identified, the specific skills of individuals are carefully matched to appropriate frameworks and suitable host employers. In addition to advertising Apprenticeship vacancies, ViSTA has also held recruitment fairs.

ViSTA recruits a diverse range of people with differing needs as apprentices, which reflects the underpinning values of the Third Sector. The Chief Executive explained how they pride themselves on the Third Sectors ability to “harness opportunities for an individual to come into the Apprenticeship programme, who probably would not get in elsewhere”. ViSTA aims to keep individuals in their employer placements by supporting the learners to overcome barriers (such as poor timekeeping) and by negotiating with employers. They consider it an overwhelming success of their scheme that they have “shown organisations how they can use that strength to support people to come into work, who wouldn’t easily be attractive to mainstream employers”.

Building the capacity of the Third Sector

Underpinning ViSTA’s work is a commitment to assist Third Sector employers to build capacity and to reduce the bureaucratic burden of Apprenticeships. ViSTA does this by supporting Third Sector host employers with: inductions; health and safety assessments; and managing the HR processes involved in taking on an Apprentice. Their evaluation report explains that they have specifically: “Contributed towards the adoption of a common approach to risk assessments at all training centres through information sharing. Likewise, Apprenticeship contracts and Equal Opportunities policies have been shared between host employers”.

ViSTA has worked with six Third Sector host employers to develop capacity building plans, and will prioritise further capacity building with additional employers during the final year of the scheme. Success has come through ViSTA’s ability to secure the interest of a range of Third Sector employers, encouraging them to participate in the Apprenticeship Scheme. To date ViSTA has worked to develop their employer hosts’ understanding of the needs, requirements and value of apprentices. ViSTA’s Chief Executive explains that she believes: “Once employers have engaged with Apprenticeships they can then be empowered to consider their benefits for the rest of their workforce.”
Barriers and solutions

Limited understanding of Apprenticeships amongst Third Sector employers

ViSTA has found that Third Sector employers have a varied understanding of, and expectations regarding, Apprenticeships. As a workforce development specialist for the Third Sector and a learning and skills charity, ViSTA has needed to use their understanding to troubleshoot for host employers, tailoring communications between providers and employers by talking to employers in their own language and terms.

A specific example of this is the perceived issues regarding the complexity of the NVQ qualification framework. Not all Third Sector employers are familiar with this as a professional development route and the evaluation of ViSTA highlights that: “This aspect of the scheme is delivered by Somerset Skills and Learning, who are in partnership with VISTA to deliver the learning framework for all Apprenticeships. It was agreed that further action was needed in supporting organisations to understand this qualification framework”. As outlined by their Chief Executive: “The minute you mention Apprenticeships there is an expectation that there’s a college placement. But there are different formulas for each of the different Apprenticeship frameworks.” They have worked with host employers, such as Timber Re-Use, to manage “their disappointment in the NVQ framework” and to reassure them that their apprentices will still receive the required key skills training despite this framework not requiring a college placement.

A lack of appropriate Apprenticeship provision for the Third Sector

ViSTA is committed to genuinely satisfying employer needs and thoroughly understands the context of the Third Sector. This is demonstrated through their approach to match Third Sector employers’ needs with the right training. A specific example of this is in relation to youth work; a highly valuable skill-set in the Third Sector. This framework was not previously delivered in Somerset and as ViSTA’s evaluation report suggests this “Level 2 Certificate in Youth Work, was not previously accepted by Somerset County Council’s Youth Service Department”. ViSTA championed the Youth Work Apprenticeship which is now recognised by the Council’s Youth Service Department as a Level 2 Certificate. The success of ViSTA’s innovative approach is shown by the ongoing popularity of the framework - it is now one of the most commonly brokered by ViSTA.

In the case of Youth Work Apprenticeships ViSTA were particularly innovative in working with their employers to tailor provision, which was previously based on predictable work patterns of the statutory sector. In contrast, the Third Sector, by the nature of their work has varied work and needs an accommodating assessment process which can flex with employers needs. The technical certificate, which makes up part of the Youth Work Apprenticeship, created additional work for candidates and ViSTA intervened with the process shaping it to fit apprentices work plans by liaising with employers. As explained by ViSTA’s Chief Executive “We intervened in Youth Work, we went back to the tutor and assessor and pointed out that it would be much better if they could find out what the apprentices were doing at work in the next three months, and shape that into the project or documentation needed for assessment, instead of asking them to run a special project just for the assessment purposes.”

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