

Diversity in Apprenticeships - Prospectus

Diversity in Apprenticeships:

Background

The National Apprenticeship Service is responsible for delivering the high ambitions the Government has set for Apprenticeships.

The NAS has end-to-end responsibility for Apprenticeships and ultimate accountability for the national delivery of services and targets. This means that it is our job to resolve any problems, wherever they are, in the delivery system.

Our main role is to work with employers, helping more of them take on apprentices; and to work with those who advise learners so that more young people and adults are able to benefit from the experience of work-based learning.

The recently published National Apprenticeship Service Prospectus <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/NAS-Prospectus.aspx> articulates our priorities, it includes the priority:

- “To increase the number, quality and background of people, applying for Apprenticeships and in particular supporting 16-to-18-year-olds”.

And in particular to:

- “Improve the number of learners from diverse backgrounds on the Apprenticeship programme”;
- “Introduce mentoring support for those learners who need it”;
- “Highlight the range of options and careers available within Apprenticeships for young people”;
- “Provide case studies and role proposals to highlight the opportunities of Apprenticeships”;
- “Work with partner organisations to increase progression opportunities for learners”.

However, *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All*, (DCSF, DIUS, 2008) identified that not everyone benefits equally from the opportunities offered by Apprenticeships.

In particular, black and minority ethnic apprentices and those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are under-represented with Apprenticeships; there is also existing considerable gender segregation across particular vocational sectors within Apprenticeships.



The National Apprenticeship Service is now seeking potential delivery partners who feel they have the necessary skills, commitment and expertise to assist the National Apprenticeship Service in delivering against our stated priorities, in particular, working to redress the inequalities that currently exist within Apprenticeships.

The Challenge

Government is committed to increasing the number of Apprenticeship opportunities for everyone. Apprenticeships are a highly successful and respected programme and participation has increased threefold over the last decade. A great deal of work has been done to improve access to Apprenticeships. However, there remain issues of unequal participation and success rates across different groups. Apprentices need to be more representative of our country. Apprenticeships should be open and accessible to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or learning difficulty.

World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All, (DCSF, DIUS, 2008), identified a number of issues that need to be tackled:

- “The 2005 Apprenticeships pay survey found a 40% average pay differential between male and female apprentices”;
- “The Labour Research Department’s Workplace Report of 2006 also found that 70% of apprentices at the advanced level were male and that they received just over twice as much training time per week as females”;
- “The sectors that pay apprentices the highest wages provide the most hours of training. The best prospects of progression are those that are overwhelmingly male-dominated”;
- “Black and minority ethnic (BME) young people are badly under-represented in Apprenticeships compared with their numbers in the population as a whole. They are under-represented in the ‘traditional’ craft-based sectors and particularly in some of the more ‘modern’ frameworks, such as customer service (6%) and hospitality (3%)”;
- “BME apprentices are also more likely not to progress to a related job after completion of their framework than other apprentices. They are also less likely than other young people not to gain an Apprenticeship after completing a pre-Apprenticeship course”;
- “Disabled people are also under-represented on Apprenticeships”;

- **“These inequalities are not common to Apprenticeships** – they are mirrored in the wider employment pattern – but many Apprenticeships are still more segregated (by gender, ethnicity and disability) than the rest of the corresponding sector’s workforce”.

The National Apprenticeship Service fully recognises the challenge set by *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All*, (DCSF, DIUS, 2008) to take urgent action to address under-representation by ethnicity, gender, learning difficulty and/or disability in the Apprenticeship programme.

This imperative is particularly challenging in the current economic climate, where the demand from potential apprentices is increasingly likely to outstrip the supply of places offered by employers.

The National Apprenticeship Service, like other public bodies, does not have the remit to compel employers to recruit one potential apprentice over another.

Nevertheless, the National Apprenticeship Service is committed to a wide range of activity to promote equality in Apprenticeships and remove barriers for under-represented groups, including research to better understand the reasons for these inequalities, and development and delivery of effective strategies to engage under-represented groups in Apprenticeships.

The National Apprenticeship Service now wishes to invite expressions of interest based on the criteria contained within this Prospectus, the primary objective being to generate innovative delivery proposals that will contribute towards redressing the under-representation and gender segregation that currently exist in Apprenticeships.

Inequalities in Apprenticeship and Critical Mass Pilots

A contributory element towards the review and subsequent publication of *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All*, (DCSF, DIUS, 2008) was directed research activity, carried out to better understand the current situation with regard to inequalities in Apprenticeships and potential strategies to redress the imbalance.

Evidence from the research informed us that generally pathways to Apprenticeships for atypical apprentices were under-developed, support for potential atypical apprentices into and through Apprenticeships was variable, and in some circumstances, employers were not fully equipped in terms of cultural understanding, employment legislation and their overall ability to recruit and support atypical apprentices in their business.

A strategy to help address these challenges was the development and successful delivery of “Critical Mass” pilots.

The concept of “critical mass” is best described as:

“A critical mass pilot is about enrolling and critically, completing successfully, a large enough cohort of learners into Apprenticeships that they do not feel isolated, different, or out of place, but welcome, supported appropriately and adding value to the employer they are working for”.

For the purposes of clarity and understanding the working title of Critical Mass Pilots has been refined to “Diversity in Apprenticeships”. This Prospectus and supporting documentation will use this title description.

Further research by the Institute for Employment Studies has been recently produced to help shape responses to this Prospectus.

This research is available at:

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/~media/Documents/Publications/IES-Diversity-in-Apprenticeships-Report.ashx> to help potential delivery partners in the development of proposals.

The National Apprenticeship Service is now seeking proposals from interested delivery partners to meet the following key objectives:

Increase atypical and under-represented groups on Apprenticeships by:

- Developing and delivering a clear, direct and positive communication strategy on Apprenticeships to atypical and under-represented groups, their parents and communities;
- Understanding and removing any barriers to successful engagement and completion of Apprenticeships for under represented and atypical learners.

Work with employers to:

- Help employers understand and respond to atypical and under-represented group needs;
- Articulate employer requirements to atypical and under-represented groups;
- Understand employer recruitment process and prepare atypical and under-represented groups for success.

Work with atypical and under-represented groups to:

- Promote Apprenticeships to atypical and under-represented groups, their communities and key influencers, including parents, teachers, community leaders and support workers;
- Provide appropriate preparation for Apprenticeships to atypical and under-represented groups;
- Provide ongoing and effective, individualised support to atypical and under-represented groups through the employer's Apprenticeship recruitment process and, where appropriate, through their Apprenticeship.

Work with Colleges and Training Providers that deliver Apprenticeships to:

- Promote Apprenticeships to atypical and under-represented groups, their communities and key influencers, including parents, teachers, community leaders and support workers;
- Provide appropriate preparation for Apprenticeships to atypical and under-represented groups;

- Provide ongoing and effective, individualised support to atypical and under-represented groups through the employer's Apprenticeship recruitment process and, where appropriate, through their Apprenticeship.
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Target groups and priorities

Proposals should address clear evidence of need, in terms of under representation in Apprenticeships, for example, gender, ethnicity, disability, learning difficulties, religion/belief and sexual orientation. For example:

- Evidence of working in sectors with traditionally high gender segregation in Apprenticeships, including construction, engineering, hairdressing or child care;
- Demonstrating linkages and collaboration with employers who wish to broaden the diversity of their workforce through Apprenticeships, particularly public sector employers;
- Understanding and expertise in meeting the needs of particular under-represented groups;
- Strategies that effectively promote Apprenticeships in communities that traditionally are under represented on Apprenticeship programmes;
- Delivery mechanisms that prepare and support potential apprentices for entry onto Apprenticeships and provide support during and after the selection process, particularly participants aged 16 – 18 year old.

The National Apprenticeship Service are keen to consider proposals that build on good practice and existing successful initiatives however, proposals will need to demonstrate clearly how they will avoid deadweight i.e. activity which would have continued without this additional government intervention, particularly by outlining how they will reach and influence employers who employ apprentices and new atypical individuals who wish to become apprentices.

In terms of geography, national and regional proposals will be considered; we are particularly keen to receive proposals that cover locations whose population have high ethnic minority representation.

Who is eligible to participate?

Bids are invited from a range of organisations including, but not limited to those below:

- Employers;
- Sector Skills Councils;
- National Skills Academies;
- Group Training Associations;

- Apprenticeship Training Agencies;
- Colleges;
- Training Providers;
- Third sector Organisations;
- Local Government Organisations;
- Higher Education Institutions;
- Recruitment and employment agencies.

Exclusions:

None

Support available

Support available under this Prospectus includes:

Pilot funding

Funding

Funding allocated to this project is up to £2.3million over one financial year, with the possibility of up to a 12 month extension, subject to performance and budget availability.

Funding will be used to support the development of new, innovative approaches as outlined above. It will not be used to displace existing activity or funding.

Eligible activity for funding may include:

- A contribution to costs arising from the model such as co-ordination, additional learner support or development of materials;
- A contribution to staffing costs such as training or employer engagement;
- A contribution to employer costs.

Ineligible for funding:

Support under this Prospectus does not include any activity already funded through existing funding streams including:

- Employer Responsive provision;
- Young People's Learning provision;
- Hardship Fund;
- Educational Maintenance Allowance;
- Sector Compact Funding.

Potential delivery partners would need to link to existing colleges and training providers who have access to programme funding to support delivery.

What is the National Apprenticeship Service looking for?

Proposals selected will need to demonstrate how they address the following:

- **Scalability and Mainstreaming** – It is a key requirement that the funding available is used to deliver sustainable results that can be incorporated into mainstream provision. The funding is intended as pump-priming and/or capacity building for long-term, sustainable approaches. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how they will be sustainable after pilot funding has ceased. All proposals should contain a realistic, costed, scalability plan that demonstrates how the initial pilot would be developed to substantially increase and sustain the number of atypical apprentices on Apprenticeships;
- **Regional and sectoral need** – Proposals should respond to clear evidence of need in terms of sectoral under representation. Proposals require input from regional representatives of the National Apprenticeship Service to ensure they meet priority regional needs;
- **Deadweight, displacement and additionality** – i.e. provide **additional** atypical apprentices and employers rather than displace them from existing pilots, initiatives and programmes;
- **Employer engagement** – how proposals will increase the number of atypical apprentices taken up by employers on Apprenticeship programmes;
- **Innovative delivery models** – building on published research and existing programmes propose innovative delivery models that will meet the identified needs of both potential atypical apprentices and the Apprenticeship employer base;
- **Value for money** – whilst some delivery proposals and priority sectors will require higher investment, we would seek to ensure good value from the available government funding;
- **Delivery volumes and timescales** – Whilst this Prospectus is primarily about testing delivery models, with a target of 1500 new apprentices engaged specifically through this project, it is important to consider volumes of learners impacted through the proposed models;

- **Contract management** – the National Apprenticeship Service are seeking 8-10 projects that will engage a minimum of 150 atypical learners per project, this should allow flexibilities in terms of consortium proposals and enable effective and efficient contract management;
- **Track record** – we will seek proposals which demonstrate a strong track record in delivery of support to both atypical learners and employers who wish to broaden the diversity of their workforce;
- **Commitment to Diversity in Apprenticeship** - The National Apprenticeship Service is committed to promoting equality through procurement. Please outline your organisation's equality and diversity policies, together with the number of apprentices currently employed within your organisation and how Apprenticeships are integrated into your human resource strategy;
- **Quality** – The National Apprenticeship Service wish to work with delivery partners that can demonstrate a robust and effective track record with regard to quality assurance and quality improvement methodologies, please include in your proposal any recognised quality assurance performance measures and current status, including but not limited to, Success rates, Ofsted inspection grades, achievement of the Training Quality Standard and CoVE status in relevant sectors.

Further to this, proposals will also need to demonstrate:

- **Impact** - on the relevant sector(s), region(s) and employers;
- **Customer and employer journey** – how the proposal will support and enhance the experience of learners and employers;
- **Resilience** – how proposals will achieve their objectives in the current economic climate;
- **Capability** – staffing resource and expertise to deliver the proposal;
- **Partnership, stakeholders and wider linkage**– how the proposal incorporates and draws on the expertise and roles of a range of different organisations and employer skills services;
- **Type of delivery** - Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the delivery model will address needs identified in terms of levels, frameworks, types, i.e. proportion of learners on Apprenticeships,

Advanced Apprenticeships and the age range of participants where 16 -18 year old is a priority for engagement with Apprenticeships;

- **Leverage** - Proposals may wish to demonstrate leverage and contributions from other sources, e.g. Existing LSC funded provision, employer contributions, ESF funding, DWP access to work, public sector partners and timescales for receipt of funding i.e. in set-up phase, post-set-up or ongoing;
- **Governance** - Proposals should describe how employers and support organisations will be fully engaged in the governance of the project;
- **Evaluation** – Proposals should include ongoing and final project evaluation methodologies to enable the National Apprenticeship Service to make objective judgements of the project effectiveness in delivering the project. Where appropriate geographical and sectoral data; for example; Equality and Diversity Impact Measures should be used to demonstrate project effectiveness. In addition, the National Apprenticeship Service will commission independent project evaluation to determine overall project effectiveness;
- **Progression** - Proposals should show the learner journey from source (i.e. school or academies, community groups) through to permanent employment through an Apprenticeship;
- **Additional benefits** - Proposals should outline any secondary benefits such as reducing young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), reducing unemployment, impact on social deprivation indicators, impact on business productivity, skills gaps, etc.

Future funding

Evidence from these pilots will be used to inform decisions on full roll-out or further investment. However, funding for projects under this Prospectus is not a guarantee of any future funding. Please make reference to section on Scalability and Mainstreaming.

State Aid

State Aid is a European Commission term which refers to forms of assistance from a public body or publicly-funded body, given to undertakings engaged in economic commercial activity on a selective basis, with the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union. Preferential public assistance - State Aid - can distort the market, which in turn can result in lower competitiveness for business, less innovation and ultimately higher prices for

consumers. There is therefore a need for effective State Aid control in order to maintain a level playing field for free and fair competition in the single market and to guard against subsidy races and national protectionism. The State Aid rules are designed to regulate subsidies and to stop public authorities from distorting the markets. They also provide a framework and discipline to assist public authorities to ensure that scarce public resources are targeted where they are most required in an efficient and effective manner.

Rules on State Aid will apply to projects supported under this Prospectus.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) -

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/businesslaw/state-aid/index.html>

Compliance with current legislation, in particular, but not limited to:

- All relevant Data Protection legislation;
 - All relevant equality legislation, including positive action provisions.
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Application process and timetable

Based on the procurement timetable below the National Apprenticeship Service expects delivery to commence in April 2010.

This Prospectus is an open invitation published through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

All interested applicants should register via the following link to progress thier interest:

<https://lsc.bravosolution.co.uk>

Stage 1: Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

The PQQ stage will result in a short list of potential providers being selected to proceed to stage 2: Invitation to Tender. Those not invited to proceed to the next stage will be notified and feedback given if requested.

Stage 2: Invitation to Tender (ITT)

Detailed proposals will be scored against a range of criteria as outlined in this Prospectus. Those not invited to proceed to the next stage will be notified and feedback given if requested.

Stage 3: Finalise and Award contracts

Stage 4: Ongoing contract management

Timetable

Action	Start date	End date	Total days
Publish OJEU	06/11/2009	07/12/2009	31 Calendar days
Publish PQQ	06/11/2009	07/12/2009	31 Calendar days
PQQ Return date deadline	07/12/2009 5pm		
PQQ Regional scoring - Including moderation panel with regional input	08/12/2009	24/12/2009	3 weeks
Inform successful and unsuccessful organisations of the outcome	04/01/2010		
Publish ITT	11/01/2010	15/02/2010	35 Calendar days
ITT Return date	15/02/2010 5pm		
ITT regional scoring	15/02/2010	07/03/2010	3 weeks
Regional presentation and selection panels	08/03/2010	19/03/2010	2 weeks
Successful/unsuccessful bids	22/03/2010		
Mandatory standstill period	22/03/2010	31/03/2010	10 Calendar days
Contract start	10/04/2010		



Queries

All queries and communication should be directed via the Bravo system to comply with the OJEU procurement process. <https://lsc.bravosolution.co.uk>