



**YOUNG
WOMEN'S
TRUST**

**MAKING
APPRENTICESHIPS
WORK FOR
YOUNG WOMEN**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Young Women's Trust would like to thank the young women who have contributed to the Apprenticeship Working Group and the stakeholders who attended the co-creation event on 23rd November 2015.

We would also like to thank British Chambers of Commerce, The Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, The UK Commission for Employment and Skills, Federation of Small Business, the Construction Industry Training Board and Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) for their support in identifying good practice. WISE also produce resources to encourage girls into STEM in their 'People Like Me' pack.

METHODOLOGY

Researching this report, Young Women's Trust:

- Reviewed existing literature.
- Held focus groups in Birmingham and Manchester.
- Polled 1,269 young people about their experiences/ views of apprenticeships.
- Held a co-creation event bringing together young women from Young Women's Trust's apprenticeship working group with employers, government officials, think tanks and charities to discuss the challenges and prioritise actions.
- Held further in-depth discussions with these stakeholders to discuss emerging recommendations.

The recommendations in this report have been driven by the experiences and needs of young women and created with the input and collaboration of stakeholders, employers and policy-makers. As a result, the recommendations are workable, practical and creative proposals to improve the apprenticeship opportunities available to young women and turn the tide on their present disadvantages.

Young Women's Trust
7-8 Newbury Street
London EC1A 7HU

t: 020 7600 7451

e: info@youngwomenstrust.org
www.youngwomenstrust.org

 @ywtrust

 www.facebook.com/youngwomenstrust

© Young Women's Trust 2016

FOREWORD

I joined Young Women's Trust's Apprenticeship Working Group because I wanted to use my experience to inform those that can influence change and help make apprenticeships fair, equal and progressive for young women.

At 24 I had been out of work for close to a year. Despite going for numerous interviews, no one would hire me. The sense of rejection and not feeling good enough began to take its toll on my mental wellbeing, but finally, just as I was on the verge of giving up, I was able to secure an apprenticeship in an organisation that saw my desire to work and develop. This apprenticeship brought me a sense of fulfilment knowing that I had a reason to get up in the morning. I was hopeful about the long term career prospects. In late 2015, I completed my apprenticeship gaining a Level 3 NVQ in Business and Administration and I'm forever thankful to the organisation that employed me. Sadly, after the apprenticeship ended there was no job for me.

As this report highlights, I am just one out of thousands of young women who are likely to be out of work upon the completion of an apprenticeship. Having been not in education, employment or training (NEET) just a year before, the possibility of going back to that situation after a year of productivity was my worst nightmare.

Although we often hear about what a success story apprenticeships are, this report highlights that for many young women, the reality is often one of poor pay, underrepresentation in male dominated fields, a lack of flexibility around working hours, and limited long term prospects.

This is why we need to work collectively to ensure there are bold, positive steps taken in order to create fair opportunities for young women. Doing so will bring huge benefits for the Government, employers and training providers, and most importantly the young women that have a burning desire to work, learn, and progress.

Kerri Leung-Sykes

Member of Young Women's Trust's
Apprenticeship Working Group



INTRODUCTION

Historically more men than women took apprenticeships, largely in manual trades heavily dominated by men. Even as the image of apprenticeships changed from this traditional model, expanding into new sectors in the 1990s and early 2000s, apprenticeships were still largely a man's world.

Yet this has changed in recent years. Since 2010 women apprentices have outnumbered men. In 2014/15 there were 264,750 female apprentices and 235,140 male¹.

As the total number of apprentices has almost tripled over the last 13 years, there has been a rapid growth in apprenticeship opportunities for young women. This should represent a massive success story.

Sadly the headline figures mask a more complex picture. Many opportunities are being missed because dramatic occupational segregation by gender persists at the apprenticeship level. For example, women comprise 94% of childcare apprentices but just under 4% of engineering apprentices².

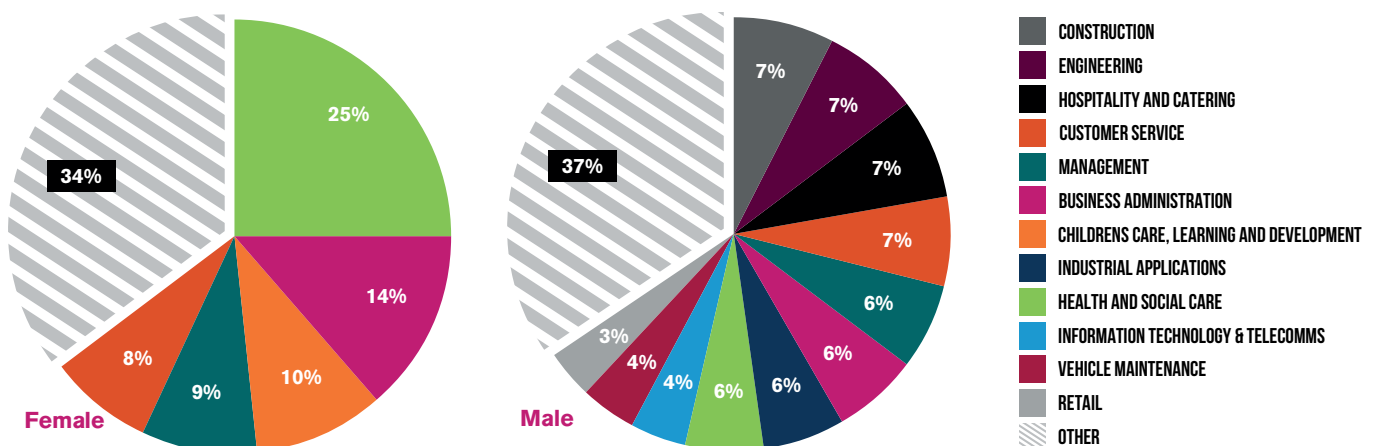
Most strikingly, these figures have hardly changed in the last decade. In some cases they have even gone backwards. The percentage of female engineering apprentices has actually declined from 4.6% in 2002 to 3.8% in 2014 (the most recent year for which figures are available)³.

Occupational gender segregation contributes to the fact that young women are losing out at every level with apprenticeships:

- 1) Women tend to work in fewer sectors (fig1).
- 2) Women receive lower pay than men; an average of £4.82 an hour compared with £5.85⁴. Male apprentices get paid 21% more per hour, leaving women potentially over £2000 worse off per year⁵.
- 3) Women are less likely to receive training as part of their apprenticeship. Young Women's Trust polling with ComRes found that 7% of young women said they received no training at work, compared to 4% of young men. 23% received no training outside of work, compared to 12% of young men⁶.
- 4) Women are more likely to be out of work at the end of their apprenticeship. 16% of women said that they were out of work, compared to 6% of men⁷.

As the Government strives to meet its target of creating 3 million apprentices by the end of this parliament in 2020, action is required to prevent these trends becoming further entrenched. Apprenticeships need to serve young women better and enable the full labour market to benefit from young women's talents.

Apprentices by Sector



1 Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Starts by geography, learner demographics, and sector/subject area 2002/3-2015/16
 2 Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Achievements by framework code, level and gender 2002/3-2013/14
 3 Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Achievements by framework code, level and gender 2002/3-2013/14

4 YWT Poll with ComRes, 2015
 5 Calculations based on a 35 hour working week
 6 YWT Poll with ComRes, 2015
 7 YWT Poll with ComRes, 2015

TAKING POSITIVE ACTION TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES

There is still extreme segregation by gender in apprenticeships. The under-representation of women in male-dominated sectors hasn't improved in more than a decade and it won't change unless organisations take a proactive approach.

Young men are more likely to take apprenticeships in Information Technology (IT), Engineering and Construction. These industries tend to offer higher pay and better progression routes.

Female apprentices are still much more likely to be found in the service sectors where pay, qualification levels and career prospects tend to be lower.

In 2014 there were 74 men starting an apprenticeship in plumbing for every woman. Similarly, for every female apprentice entering the construction sector in England there were 56 men and there were 25 men for every woman starting an apprenticeship in engineering.

As well as limiting women's career horizons, this imbalance prevents businesses recruiting from the widest pool of talent. The UK desperately needs more engineers. Just under one in five young people need to enter engineering to fill the gap⁸. Clearly we can't meet this need by relying on one gender. We need women to be part of the solution.

For employers, improving gender balance brings other business benefits too. Research has linked increased diversity with better financial returns⁹. Growing diversity in a workforce generates diverse thinking, improving innovation.

While women's progress in male-dominated sectors has stalled, over the past decade there has been a progressive shift in the proportion of male apprentices working in traditionally female-dominated sectors. In childcare, the proportion of male apprentices has risen from 2.9% in 2002 to 5.7% in 2014. The transformation has been more dramatic in health and social care. In 2014 there were 11,350 male apprentices starting in health and social care, over ten times the number in 2002, and increasing as a proportion from 10.7% to 16.2%¹⁰.

Employers need to actively and creatively address the barriers to women applying for jobs in male-dominated sectors. They must be ambitious with their targets because tokenism will fail. Female recruits who are vastly outnumbered by male counterparts are less likely to stay the course of their apprenticeship. Imagine being one woman amongst a sea of men, or one of the 600 women beginning an apprenticeship in engineering, as opposed to one of the 15,000 men¹¹. Action is needed to bring about a step-change in the numbers of women in these sectors if we are to see meaningful and lasting outcomes.

Many apprenticeships continue to stipulate minimum academic entry requirements of 5 GCSEs at levels A* to C including Maths and English. Despite progress in academic attainment, there were still 120,000 young women who left school without those grades in 2015 and who find themselves locked out of many vocational opportunities¹². Removing academic entry requirements, unless they are an essential or legal requirement for the role, can help to encourage diversity. There is no evidence that this leads to a reduction in the quality of apprentices recruited. In fact, when Barclays stopped selecting apprentices based on minimum academic entry requirements, its internal analysis found no differences in the performance of apprentices who had GCSEs and those that did not after two years in the programme¹³.

There is evidence which suggests that women tend not to apply for roles unless they meet all the criteria, whereas men are more likely to put themselves forward for roles despite not meeting the criteria¹⁴.

As well as considering the explicit criteria for a job, employers need to be attentive to the language used to advertise certain roles, which is often gendered. Adverts in traditionally male sectors tend to use words such as 'leader', 'competitive' or 'dominant', which have been shown to deter female applicants who are more likely to respond to words such as 'support', 'understand' or 'interpersonal'¹⁵. Changing the wording in adverts and job descriptions can encourage more women to apply.

8 Engineering UK 2015: The State of Engineering http://www.engineeringuk.com/EngineeringUK2015/EngUK_Report_2015_Interactive.pdf

9 http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/organization/why_diversity_matters

10 Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Achievements by framework code, level and gender 2002/3-2013/14

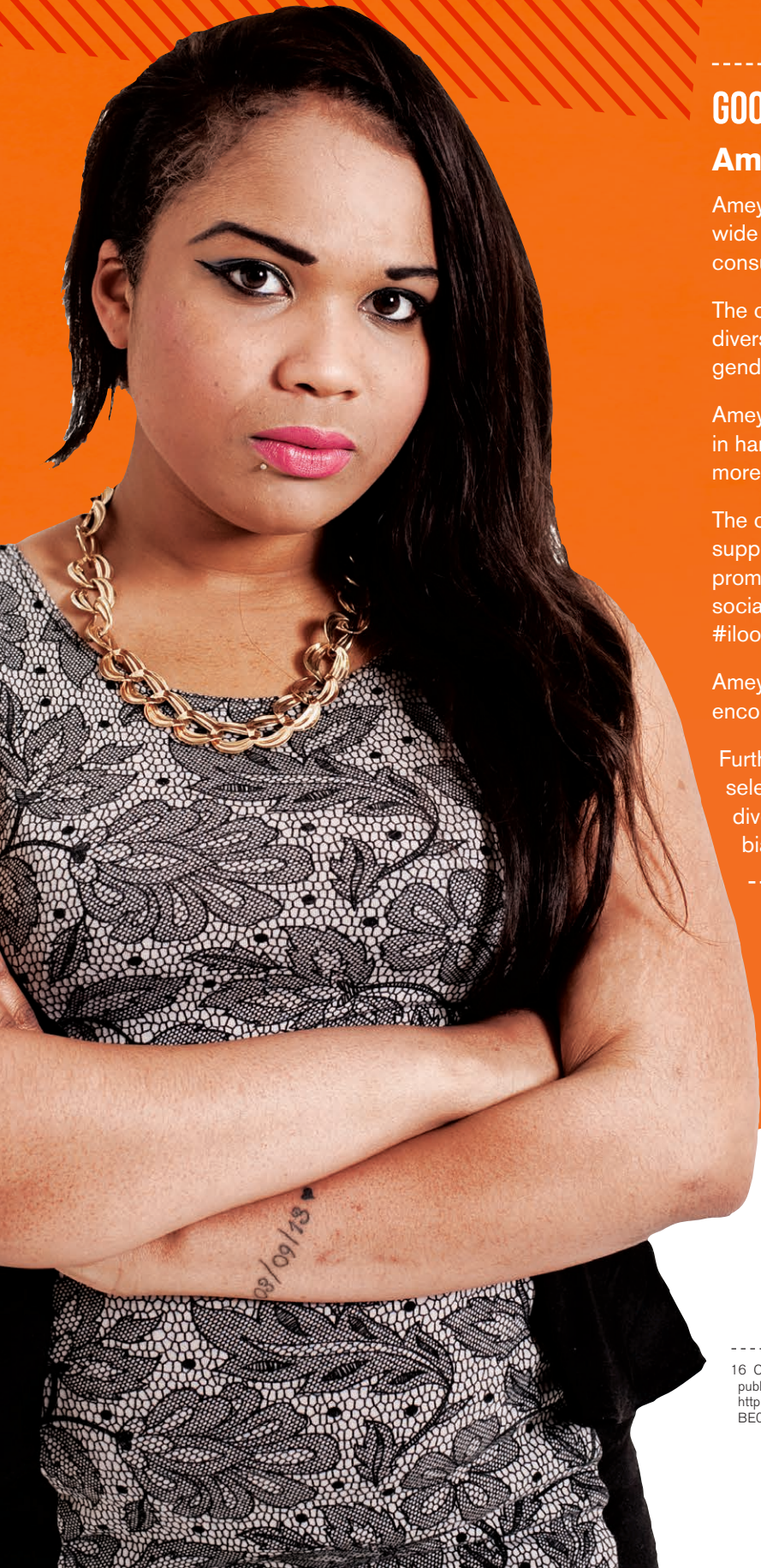
11 Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Achievements by framework code, level and gender 2002/3-2013/14

12 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revISED-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015>

13 SOURCE - Barclays presentation at launch of YWT Scarred for Life report

14 Institute of Leadership and Management, 'Ambition and Gender at Work'; The McKinsey Quarterly Sep 2008 'A Business Case for Women'

15 Gaucher and Friesen, 2011, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=gendered-wording-in-job-adverts.pdf&site=7>



GOOD PRACTICE

Amey – Positive action

Amey is an infrastructure services provider, offering a wide range of services including asset management and consultancy.

The company has made strong efforts to increase the diversity of its workforce, setting targets addressing gender inequality.

Amey started banishing the stereotypical image of men in hard hats from their external advertising and featuring more young women employees as role models.

The company has hosted events across the country in support of National Women in Engineering Day and promoted women in the sector through the industry's social media campaigns #notjustforboys and #ilooklikeanengineer.

Amey have also established links with local schools to encourage girls to take up apprenticeship opportunities.

Furthermore, all employees with recruitment and selection responsibilities are required to attend diversity awareness training to minimise the risk of bias and discrimination in the recruitment process¹⁶.

¹⁶ Chartered Institute from Highways and Transportation, Routes to Diversity and Inclusion, published October 2015
<http://www.ciht.org.uk/download.cfm/docid/C83B8131-5FB7-49CE-BE0BBDAEA8889550>

YOUNG WOMAN CASE STUDY

Glynn – Need a step change in recruiting young women

Glynn started an apprenticeship in construction but didn't complete it.

Glynn says, "I wanted to be a bricklayer so I started an apprenticeship with City and Guilds. I was excited and highly motivated and I couldn't wait to get muddy. At 17 I was yet to be exposed to society's strong view of gender roles."

Unfortunately this soon changed. "From the moment I stepped onto the building site, I was automatically treated differently. There was a view among the other apprentices that I didn't belong there. There was one other woman, but we were 2 out of 20 and it quickly became difficult to persevere. I experienced constant sexist remarks like 'get us a cuppa' or 'be careful you don't want to break a nail!'"

"I approached my course coordinator but the general response was 'it's only banter', or my favourite, 'don't be so emotional'. It was irritating and emotionally draining so I decided it would be more beneficial to terminate my apprenticeship and go straight into the labour market."

Glynn's experience illustrates the need for positive action to drastically increase the number of young women recruited and to improve the support they receive so that they are not so outnumbered and can be better integrated into the workforce.

Recommendations

- 1. Where it can be shown that the number of women undertaking apprenticeships in any given sector (for example Engineering, IT or Construction) is disproportionately low, employers should consider whether they can take positive action to increase the participation of women.**
 - a) Setting targets for increasing the participation of women in the targeted sectors.
 - b) Outreach work to raise awareness amongst women of opportunities in the targeted sectors.
 - c) Reserving places on training courses for women.
 - d) Working with local schools, Further Education Colleges and directly with women and to invite them to open days, promotional events, shadowing opportunities and taster days.
 - e) Providing mentoring to women who have an interest in the targeted sectors.
 - f) Providing specific diversity training to all staff with recruitment responsibilities.
 - g) Explicitly welcoming applications from women in advertisements and marketing material.
 - h) Adapting language in advertising and descriptions in jobs/apprenticeships to ensure they attract male and female candidates.
- 2. Employers and training providers should remove formal academic entry requirements for apprenticeships unless they are directly necessary for performing the role.**
- 3. Employers should develop a diversity action plan for their apprenticeship schemes.**
- 4. The new Institute for Apprenticeships should have a diversity strand as part of its work.**

IMPROVING REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to monitor progress on diversity, it needs to be tracked. Furthermore, it is important to track the outcomes of apprenticeships so that we can monitor their success long-term.

Currently, statistics exist at a sectoral level showing the breakdown of apprentices by various characteristics including age, gender and ethnicity. This data is collated by the Skills Funding Agency and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. The basis for this is the Individualised Learner Record which is collected by colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers.

However, reforms to apprenticeships are making them increasingly employer-led. As employers take more control of the design and quality of apprenticeships they need to take more responsibility for their diversity and be more accountable. Transparency is crucial in order to spur greater efforts to promote gender equality.

Beyond looking at the number of men and women in different sectors, it is also important to understand the progression they make after they finish their apprenticeship. Young Women's Trust polling showed that young women were almost three times more likely than young men to be unemployed when they finished their apprenticeship. Young women in male-dominated sectors are also more likely to leave their apprenticeship before completion¹⁷.

The Demos Commission on Apprenticeships¹⁸ recommended that destination data be further developed. Currently schools are responsible for destination data and only cover the destinations of pupils one year after leaving school. The Commission recommended that pupils should be tracked over a longer period to provide a better measure of career outcomes. Destination data could also track earnings. Such metrics would encourage schools to provide better careers advice and encourage employers to advertise apprenticeships with better prospects.

As women are currently more likely to be out of work at the end of their apprenticeship, reports that indicate job prospects for apprenticeships would help to better inform young peoples' choices. For example, research from the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion in 2012 showed that for each person completing a qualification in building services engineering, there were almost 13 jobs, whereas there were just 2 jobs in hairdressing¹⁹.

19 CESI - Hidden Talents and job vacancies vs those leaving training http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/sites/niace_en/files/publications/CESI_Hidden_Talents_Skills_Mismatch.pdf?redirectedfrom=cesi



17 Gambin, L., & Hogarth, T., (2015): 'Factors affecting completion of apprenticeship training in England', Journal of Education and Work, DOI: 10.1080/13639080.2014.997679

18 http://www.demos.co.uk/files/476_1504_CoA_WEB_2_.pdf?1425489134

GOOD PRACTICE

Rolls-Royce – collecting data and public commitments

Rolls-Royce has committed to increase female participation in apprenticeship and graduate programmes and work experience placements. It has also promised to develop new outreach activities targeting young women and to increase female role models delivering outreach activities.

A key driver of this commitment has been the development of improved diversity and inclusion monitoring at every level of its business. This work has been led from the top of the company and is built into its business plan. Rolls-Royce wanted to embed responsibility for diversity in the culture of the organisation, rather than outsourcing it to human resources.

Initially, Rolls-Royce were met with disbelief that there was a need to develop a more inclusive culture and foster greater respect among employees. However, by using focus group findings and their data showing trends or lack of improvement, they were able to challenge these views. This helped change a lot of mind-sets, especially as data is strongly valued in an engineering organisation.

All business areas are required to include diversity and inclusion objectives in their business plan, supported by the diversity and inclusion team which sets out guidelines for managers.

This is underpinned by an annual review of Diversity and Inclusion which enables the company to track progress year-on-year and to identify successes and where further improvements are needed. The company developed a 'D&I dashboard' to allow teams to collect and monitor data relating to gender, age and ethnicity as well as other aspects of personal development and progression. This makes it easy to measure the progress being made and such accountability is essential in driving change.

Adapted from Royal Academy of Engineers Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit²⁰.

Recommendations

5. Greater emphasis should be placed on the collection and publication by employers of data relating to apprenticeships, including by gender, to increase accountability and transparency.

- a) Organisations offering apprenticeships should publish the number of apprentices they employ, completion rates and destinations with the figures broken down by age, gender, ethnicity, disability, apprenticeship level and role.
- b) Employers should publish targets for the ratio of male to female apprentices along with a strategy for meeting these targets.
- c) Public sector employers should lead the way on setting gender targets as part of their plans to increase the number of apprentices.

²⁰ <http://www.raeng.org.uk/policy/diversity-in-engineering/diversity-and-inclusion-toolkit>

MAKING APPRENTICESHIPS MORE FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE

Young women apprentices are likely to be paid less than men. Young Women's Trust polling found that female apprentices reported earning an average of £4.82 an hour compared with £5.85 for male apprentices²¹. Male apprentices get paid 21% more per hour, leaving women over £2000 worse off per year²².

One major driver of women receiving lower pay is the fact that female-dominated sectors tend to be those at the bottom end of the pay-scale. Apprenticeships are mirroring a wider industrial and societal divide, whereby the work most often done by women is undervalued.

The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is just £3.30, lower than the rates for other groups. This low rate pay prevents many apprentices from being able to cover basic living costs and it appears to be that the apprenticeships undertaken by women are those most likely to have rates of pay at or very close to the minimum. Apprenticeships can be taken at intermediate, advanced or higher levels. At intermediate and advanced levels, the median hourly wage (before recent increases to the apprenticeship minimum wage) ranges from £2.94 in hairdressing (female-dominated) to £6.24 in electrotechnical (male-dominated)²³. In fact, hairdressing has consistently been the lowest paid sector and 92% of hairdressing apprenticeships are filled by women²⁴.

Apprenticeship wages often reflect the different pay scales in the respective industries. The starting salary for a care worker is £12,000 and that is also the average salary²⁵. 84% of apprenticeships in the health and social care sector are taken up by women. Meanwhile, the starting salary for a mechanical engineer is £22,000 and rises to an average of £40,000. 96% of apprenticeships in engineering are occupied by men.

Young women we spoke to, especially those living independently, repeatedly stated that whilst they understood the need for employers to pay wages they could afford as a business, apprenticeship wages did not allow them to meet basic costs, including travel to work.

Young Women's Trust polling indicated that men are more willing to invest in apprenticeships in the long-term, appreciating the benefits of a good job with better pay later down the line; whereas women are more focused on the immediate benefits, looking for security in the apprenticeship itself in the form of better pay or more flexible work. This makes it more important to highlight the immediate advantages of apprenticeships to women.

Young women are more likely than young men to have caring responsibilities and this drives their increased need for flexible apprenticeships.

Whilst the Government plans to make up to 30 hours free childcare per week available (covering 38 weeks of the year) for parents working more than 16 hours a week, there remains considerable uncertainty about the extent to which all apprentices will be able to benefit. We are therefore concerned that many apprentices will be unable to access this support.

Polling for the Young Women's Trust 'Clock Turns Back' report revealed that 25% of young women with caring responsibilities said that their responsibilities meant that they had taken a different job from the one they would have chosen, whereas only 11% of young men with such responsibilities said the same. Young men do not appear to experience the same limitations of career choice.

21 YWT Poll with ComRes

22 Calculations based on a 35 hour working week

23 http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/learner-drivers-apprenticeships_June2015.pdf?noredirect=1

24 Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Achievements by framework code, level and gender 2002/3-2013/14 - data calculated from 2013/14, most recent year available.

25 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/452078/15.01.05_UKCES_Career_Brochure_V13_reduced.pdf



GOOD PRACTICE

Support with Travel and Childcare

Job Centre Plus can provide a travel card offering 50% discount for the unemployed towards travel costs to interviews and for the first 3 months of an apprenticeship. This discount covers most National Rail journeys throughout the UK as well as all forms of transport operated by Transport for London, via the Oyster card system. Similar schemes operate in some other local authority areas including the West Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool.

Apprentices under the age of 19 may also be able to access support for childcare through 'Care to Learn' funding and older apprentices may apply for support through the discretionary learner support programme. This programme can also offer support for other apprenticeship costs providing the apprentice meets eligibility criteria.

Schemes offering funding for childcare and discounted travel provide tremendous support for apprentices. There needs to be more focus on improving access to such schemes.

GOOD PRACTICE

Hendra Healthcare – Apprentices paid the same as permanent staff

Hendra Healthcare is an established family-run residential home located in Ludlow, Shropshire, which was rated 'Outstanding' in its most recent Care Quality Commission inspection. It employs 28 full and part time staff.

A few years ago there was an identified lack of good quality carers locally which was a real skills gap in the labour market, so Hendra Healthcare decided to develop new staff through apprenticeships, training them to the high care standards they required.

The company committed to paying apprentices and long standing employees the same rate of pay, showing their commitment to apprentices from day one.

Hendra Healthcare's investment in apprentices has been rewarded by its 100% completion and retention rate on apprenticeship programmes.

The success of the apprenticeships has led to a raft of positive outcomes for the employer, employees and residents of the care home.

Hendra Healthcare has used apprenticeships to minimise skills shortages and reduce costs associated with recruitment.

Flexible working arrangements also enable apprentices to meet other commitments such as caring for children or relatives. The company has successfully integrated former apprentices into senior roles with 75% of senior managers being former apprentices²⁶.

²⁶ <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/Apprenticeships/Homepage/Return-on-investment-in-adult-social-care-Apprenticeships-case-studies.pdf>

YW CASE STUDY

Amber – Apprenticeships don't pay enough

Amber started an apprenticeship for a small company and was paid the apprentice minimum wage. This was a real struggle to live on. Despite the low pay, the pressures of the work were high and some of Amber's fellow apprentices were left in tears because of the stress. The low pay and poor level of support forced Amber to leave her apprenticeship after just three months.

Amber then went on to do an apprenticeship with a technology firm which was completely different. This involved two weeks of paid training before starting work. The wage was fair and sufficient to live on and increased after three months. Amber's manager and team were incredibly supportive and encouraged personal growth. This allowed Amber to complete her apprenticeship, gaining valuable skills and experience in the process.

YW CASE STUDY

Angela – Single Mum needs Flexibility

Angela started to apply for an apprenticeship in Project Management in September 2015 but then decided against it because it required full-time working hours. Being a single mother to a four year old boy, Angela requires flexible working hours which will enable her to work and spend quality time with her child. This is essential for Angela.

Angela said, *"I want to work and do the school run. As a lone parent, it's important for me to work and provide for my son and to look after him, and for my son to see me working."*

"Employers need to be open to flexible working. I was deterred from applying due to non-flexibility."

Recommendations

6. Pay and financial support for apprenticeships should be increased.

- The Government should commit to moving towards a single Living Wage for all age groups, regardless of apprenticeship status.
- Funding should be made available for complimentary or discounted travel for apprentices.
- Support to cover childcare costs should be made available to apprentices on the same basis as other workers.

7. There should be a greater availability of part-time and flexible apprenticeships.

- More apprenticeships should be made available with the possibility of taking the role on a part time basis.
- The Government should issue renewed guidance on part time and flexible apprenticeships to clarify the position for employers.



IMPROVING **ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

Young women tend to get funneled into a narrow range of careers that are insecure, lower paid and have fewer routes for progression.

Apprenticeships are currently reinforcing, rather than challenging, occupational segregation by gender. Young women are still far less likely than young men to access the apprenticeships with the best prospects in terms of pay and career progression.

Girlguiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey 2015²⁷ shows that gendered career stereotypes are already embedded in girls aged 7 to 10 years old. The majority of girls said they were better than boys at looking after children, cooking, and caring. While the majority also agreed that they could do anything that a boy could do, very few chose occupational areas that are traditionally male-dominated. When asked to choose their top three potential careers, only 3% chose engineer or architect, 6% scientist or lawyer.

There is an urgent need for high-quality careers advice to help young women consider a wider range of options. In polling carried out for this report, just 9% of female apprentices said that careers advice was a factor in making their choice. More than 20% of young men said that the careers advice they received helped them make their decision. This suggests that young women are not receiving the same level of advice about apprenticeships as young men.

In order to help girls and boys aspire to non-traditional areas of work, research suggests that they need to be exposed to gender awareness activities as early as possible in their school and even during the pre-school years²⁸. Role models, such as female construction workers and plumbers and male carers and hairdressers, need to be brought into schools, colleges and the media. Young people should be encouraged to try non-traditional jobs through work experience and taster days.

However, it is not just at school where careers advice is essential. 41% of young women who were Not in Education, Employment or Training said that careers advice would be most useful between the ages of 18

and 21²⁹. This is a crucial period of transition for many young people, offering a second chance for those who did not have immediate success when they left school or college. Ongoing careers advice is essential to ensure that young women are able to make informed choices about their career and access support to return to education, training and employment, including apprenticeships. Young Women's Trust's Scarred for Life report found that the National Careers Service was a valuable resource but that few young women used the service or even knew it existed.

Support is also crucial when young women reach the workplace, particularly for those starting out in male-dominated industries. Focus groups have shown that young women often face difficulties and feel set up to fail because of the lack of support. Being a woman in a predominantly male occupation is positively associated with non-completion of an apprenticeship³⁰. Ensuring proper support for young women during their apprenticeships is therefore essential.

GOOD PRACTICE

Chambers of Commerce School Business Partnership Project – Better links with schools

In 2014, five Chambers of Commerce began a project aimed at tackling the gender imbalance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) careers. The project is supported by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and involves Chambers supporting schools to expand the career horizons of female pupils. Activities include organising business speakers in schools, work placements, visits to STEM employers, mentoring and workshops.

The project has worked with 21 schools and over 1,630 pupils and has been an example of how Chambers can strengthen partnerships between business and education.

27 http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/GAS_15_website.pdf

28 Fuller, A and Unwin, L. (2013) Gender Segregation, Apprenticeship, and the Raising of the Participation Age in England: are Young Women at a Disadvantage? published by the Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies <http://www.llakes.ac.uk/sites/llakes.ac.uk/files/44.%20Fuller%20and%20Unwin.pdf>

29 Polling by Young Women's Trust and ComRes 2014 for the Scarred for Life Inquiry.
30 Gambin and Hogarth (2015)

YW CASE STUDY

Chloe Magee – Lack of decent careers advice

Chloe started an apprenticeship in business administration in 2009 but didn't complete it. There were two reasons for this, the first being the poor advice which led her to apply for the apprenticeship in the first place.

Chloe says, *"I got automated careers advice at school which told me I should do packing at a factory. I felt like I was being left behind. There wasn't much choice at all. The only apprenticeships 'suitable for women' were admin, childcare or hairdressing. The administration option seemed to be the only one that didn't require a particular passion for the work, so I chose that."*

The other reason for Chloe not completing her apprenticeship was low pay. The wage was just £30 a week in EMA payments. Working full-time for this paltry sum seemed unfair and exploitative and made Chloe feel undervalued and used.

A higher wage would certainly have been a real incentive for sticking it out and completing. Chloe also wishes there had been some kind of mandatory and locally relevant careers advice. Chloe laments, *"Maybe if there had been decent advice I would have found an apprenticeship to fit my personality and interests."*

Chloe says she never knew where to look for an apprenticeship and only heard about the YMCA training academy through word of mouth.

Recommendations

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

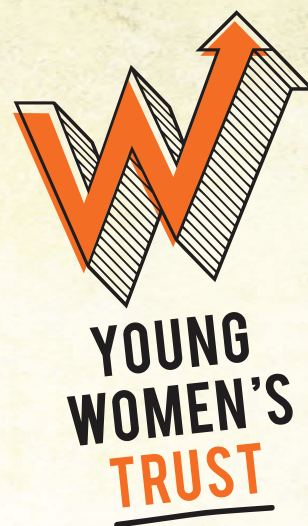
- a) Employers of all sizes should offer taster days, work experience and mentors with a specific focus on encouraging gender diversity.
- b) Providers of information, advice and guidance should be trained and encouraged to deliver advice that challenges gender stereotypes.
- c) The National Careers Service should be widely publicised to ensure access to ongoing careers advice for women of all ages.
- d) Young women working as apprentices in male-dominated sectors should be given access to mentors and additional support.

CONCLUSION

Young Women's Trust hopes these recommendations will find widespread support. If they are taken forward they will transform the experience of apprenticeships for young women. They will bring huge benefits to employers and the wider economy and ensure that the Government is able to make progress on its plans to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020.

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





7-8 Newbury Street
London EC1A 7HU
t: 020 7600 7451

e: info@youngwomenstrust.org
www.youngwomenstrust.org

 [@ywtrust](https://twitter.com/ywtrust)

 www.facebook.com/youngwomenstrust