

Recruiting apprentices: the difference between large and small companies

Large employers are more likely to hire an apprentice than SMEs.

Small companies, with two-to-nine employees represent 79% of the construction industry. Of these, just 18% employ apprentices.ⁱ

To increase starts in apprenticeships we need to look at incentivising and supporting smaller companies.

The challenge with small and micro employers is that these firms are:

- Hard to reach
- May not have the capabilities to hire an apprentice
- Lack confidence in the pipeline of new work.ⁱ

Employers' perspective of apprenticeships

83% employers are satisfied with their apprenticeship programme.

Apprenticeships are preferred to other forms of training due to their on-the-job training and the affordability of hiring an apprentice.ⁱ

Employers also say apprenticeships are a good way to upskill staff (31%) and to help young people (16%). Increased productivity is another benefit cited.ⁱ



Barriers to employing apprentices and effectiveness of schemes like the Government Apprenticeship Levy

Grants could increase recruitment of apprentices.

The most common reason for not offering an apprenticeship is that employers aren't recruiting at any level (24%).ⁱ

Grants to support apprenticeship training could increase recruitment, with 19% of employers citing this.ⁱ

Growth in starts will be limited by the capacity of providers. While the Apprenticeship Levy has encouraged higher level apprenticeships, participation in entry level apprenticeships is falling which is significant when trying to attract new people into the industry and to apprenticeships.ⁱ

Policy and funding differences between England, Scotland and Wales

Policies vary greatly between the nations.

England's focus is an apprenticeship standard rather than an apprenticeship framework as seen in other nations. Standards in England are assessed using an end point assessment.

The greatest opportunity for apprentice starts and completion rates is in England. This is because in relative terms, in Scotland and Wales, starts and completions are already very high.

To improve apprentice completion rates there needs to be a renewed focus on employer support and achievable targets.

Eight good reasons to hire an apprentice

- 1 It's a more cost-effective way to recruit staff
- 2 Improves productivity
- 3 They inject a breath of fresh air in your business
- 4 Develop specific skills your business needs
- 5 An extra pair of hands allows you to take on more work
- 6 Apprenticeships can be flexibly tailored to the needs of your business
- 7 Employing an apprentice can teach your workforce new skills
- 8 Attract the very best in future talent