

Success through Skills Strategy' - Apprenticeships Northern Ireland

Date of creation

2006

Beneficiaries

Unemployed young people

ApprenticeshipsNI is demand-led training provision with employers recruiting and retaining apprentices in line with business needs. There is no upper age limit to participate on the ApprenticeshipNI Programme but certain conditions apply for people aged twenty-five years and over including being employed within an economically important sector needed to rebalance the economy.

Countries

 **United Kingdom**

Education level and sector

-  **Secondary education**
-  **Upper secondary education**
-  **Upper secondary vocational education and training (school-based)**
-  **Upper secondary vocational education and training (work-based learning)**

Upper secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Type of policy/initiative

Intervention

Intervention

Level of implementation / Scope

National level

Across Northern Ireland

Stage of implementation

 **Completed**

On-going for the period 2006-2015

Aims of policy/initiative

"Securing Our Success The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships" was published in June 2014. It sets out 20 key policy commitments under the following four themes. The components of an Apprenticeship; Increasing Participation; The Role of Key Players; and Ensuring Quality. Apprenticeships will be delivered and supported within the context of a range of connected policy initiatives.

Programme for Government (20/11/15)

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg20112015finalreport.pdf>

- **Economic Strategy**

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/nieconomicstrategyrevised130312.pdf>

- **Skills Strategy**

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/successthroughskillstransformingfutures.pdf>

- **STEM Strategy**

http://www.delni.gov.uk/es/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf

- **Review of Careers**

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/reviewofcareers>

- **Review of Youth Training**

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/reviewofyouthtraining>

Features and types of activities implemented

Information on the Apprenticeships NI programme can be accessed through <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships>.

The ApprenticeshipsNI programme aims to provide participants with the opportunity to take part in a Level 2/Level 3 apprenticeship where the participant, in paid employment from day one, will work towards achieving an industry-approved Level 2/Level 3 apprenticeship framework.

Higher Level Apprenticeships are also offered across various sectors from Level 4 to Level 8.

For more detailed information on Higher Level Apprenticeships refer www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeships types of apprenticeships section).

Apprenticeships usually take between two to four years to complete and each framework for the specific occupational area is agreed with the relevant industry-led representative body and comprises of directed training, related knowledge, appropriate Essential Skills, and structured workplace training. The apprenticeship framework sets out the relevant national

occupational standards and qualifications which must be achieved by the participant. The qualifications provide the evidence that the individual has achieved:

- the competencies required for performance in the particular occupation or job role; and
- the technical skills and knowledge/understanding of the theoretical concepts specifically relating to the occupation or job role, together with knowledge and understanding of the industry and its market.

The Department's commitment to an apprentice/employer is the target framework identified in the Personal Training Plan. Each framework includes the following basic elements:

- induction and modules covering Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR);
- a competence based component at Level 2/Level 3;
- Essential Skills which must include Communication, Application of Number and ICT, where appropriate to the apprenticeship framework;

ApprenticeshipsNI aims to:

- provide apprentices with the knowledge, understanding, and competence to work at a higher level in their chosen occupation;
- offer high quality training to fulfil the requirements of an appropriate 'apprenticeship framework[1]';
- contribute to raising the skills level of the Northern Ireland workforce;
- provide opportunities for progression to further and higher education and training;
- encourage the direct involvement of employers in training key personnel.

The Apprentice of the Year awards for apprentices and employers are organised in order to raise awareness of the benefits and outcomes of apprenticeships.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-frameworks-li...>

Resources

In the case of apprentices aged 16-24, the Department for Economy funds 100% of the cost of off-the-job training with funding for apprentices aged 25 years and focused on priority economic areas and set at fifty percent of that available for 16-24 year olds. These details are on the can be found here: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/apprenticeships-delivering-work-based-training-and-qualifications-employees>

To encourage an employer to retain an apprentice, an incentive payment is available. A payment of between £500 and £1,500 is made to the employer upon the apprentice's achievement of all targeted qualifications.

Under Apprenticeships NI the training is delivered by contracted training providers.

Evaluation of the measure

The targets were set as follows for 2017/2018 ;

Level 2 Apprenticeships

- To ensure that as a minimum **60%** of those participants who commence a Level 2 Apprenticeship during the training period 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 will achieve a Full Framework by 31st March 2020.

Level 3 via Level 2

For AppsNI 2013 Contract

The Performance Indicators for ApprenticeshipsNI starts in the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2022

- To ensure that as a minimum **65%** of those participants who commence a Level 3 Apprenticeship during the training period 1st April 2017 - 31st March 2018 will achieve a NVQ Level 2 by 31st March 2020, thereby demonstrating that significant progress is being made towards the attainment of the Full Apprenticeship Training Framework. A minimum Full Framework achievement of **62%** by 31st March 2022 is anticipated.

Level 3 - Progression Route

To ensure that as a minimum **62%** of those participants who commence a Level 3 Apprenticeship (and have already satisfied the Level 2 requirement prior to entry) during the training period 1st April 2017 -31st March 2018 will achieve a Full Framework by 31st March 2020.

The published bulletin will show what was actually achieved.

The Statistical Bulletin provides key information on both the 2013 and 2017 ApprenticeshipsNI programmes and the current publication contains data up to the end of April 2018. This can be found here: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/apprenticeshipsni-statistics-august-2013-april-2018>

Quality contract management and compliance inspections and audits of training suppliers are regularly conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measure.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

The ApprenticeshipsNI programme statistics show 56% of all participants between 2013/14 and 2016/17 academic years achieved target full frameworks.

Since ApprenticeshipsNI 2013 began in the 2013/14 academic year, 19,942 participants left the programme. Of these, 60% achieved their targeted Full Framework.

Between 2013/14 and 2016/17, the percentage of leavers at Level 2 achieving a Full Framework Level 2 increased from 33% to 65%. For the current academic year 2017/18 (up to April 2018), this figure is 58%.

Between the academic years 2013/14 and 2016/17, the percentage of leavers at Level 3 achieving a Full Framework Level 3 increased from 19% to 61%. For the current academic year 2017/18 (up to April 2018), this figure is 58%.

Although some participants have not achieved a full framework, an additional number of leavers each year achieved NVQs. In the latest full academic year 2016/17, the achievement rate for NVQ Level 2 was 70% compared with the Full Framework rate of 65%, and the comparable figures for Level 3 were 61% NVQ Level 3 and 58% Full Framework Level 3.

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. Partnership between all relevant stakeholders: success depends on close cooperation between the government, employers, training suppliers, apprentices and career services.
2. Increased employer participation: employers are heavily involved in designing the apprenticeship curriculum and qualifications to ensure portability.
3. Guarantee for training and/or apprenticeship in NI: the strategy is committed to extending apprenticeships to a wider range of occupational areas and participants gain the skills that are wanted by employers and relevant to the local economy and enhance their prospects of sustained employment and good earnings.
4. Employment benefits (i.e. payment of apprentices): people are employed as apprentices, hence they are paid for their work and the Department for the Economy pays for the 'off-the-job' training element of the apprenticeship, both of which seems to improve the retention rates.
5. Assured available skills for employers' needs: apprenticeship providers can test out many different programmes based on what employers ask, as the revised strategy allows for the creation of new programme pilots.
6. Apprentices receiving prior training through the Training for Success (TfS) programme: TfS is closely linked to apprenticeships, giving young people the opportunity to train with an employer before being employed as apprentice. Employers appreciate the fact that apprentices receive training prior to becoming employed.
7. Economic engagement from the further education (FE) colleges: all FE colleges have a business development unit, providing an interface between employers and the FE college.

Contact details for further information

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