

Overcoming the barriers to hiring tech apprentices

Digital Apprenticeship Survey Results

March 2016





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Executive Summary

This report comprises the outcomes in the first in a series of research activities that the Tech Partnership will be running during 2016 which explores employers' perceptions about digital/ tech/ IT apprenticeships.

This research was designed to elicit employer responses to why they have or have not yet taken digital apprentices in their organisations. Those employers who have taken apprentices (51% of respondents) share details about how their organisations have benefited. Those employers who have not yet taken apprentices share information around perceived barriers to doing so.

The key research findings are being used by the Tech Partnership to determine how to assist employers in understanding how apprenticeships can benefit their businesses. The most significant insights from this research are:

Employers value apprenticeships because they help them find new talent and fill vital skills gaps in their organisations

Employers cite the ability to fill vital skills gaps in their business as the key value of running their apprenticeship programmes.

Many employers don't take on apprentices because they don't know how to find the right candidates or to source high quality training

Employers indicate that the biggest barriers in making apprenticeship programmes work are around

- How to find/ recruit decent candidates.
- How to source high quality training.
- Many say that they are put off because they simply do not know where to start.

It is clear that lack of basic knowledge is a key barrier for many employers who simply do not know what options are available to them in running an apprenticeship programme.

Employers value accredited training programmes as an assurance of quality

In selecting training programmes and partners, only 23% of employers were very confident they know where to go. Over 60% recognise the value of any externally validated mark of quality for apprentice training, such as Tech Partnership accreditation.

Employers expect to take on more apprentices when the levy comes into force

62% of those employers aware of the levy said they expect to take on more apprentices – either in the form of hiring young recruits or retraining existing staff - as a result of the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017.

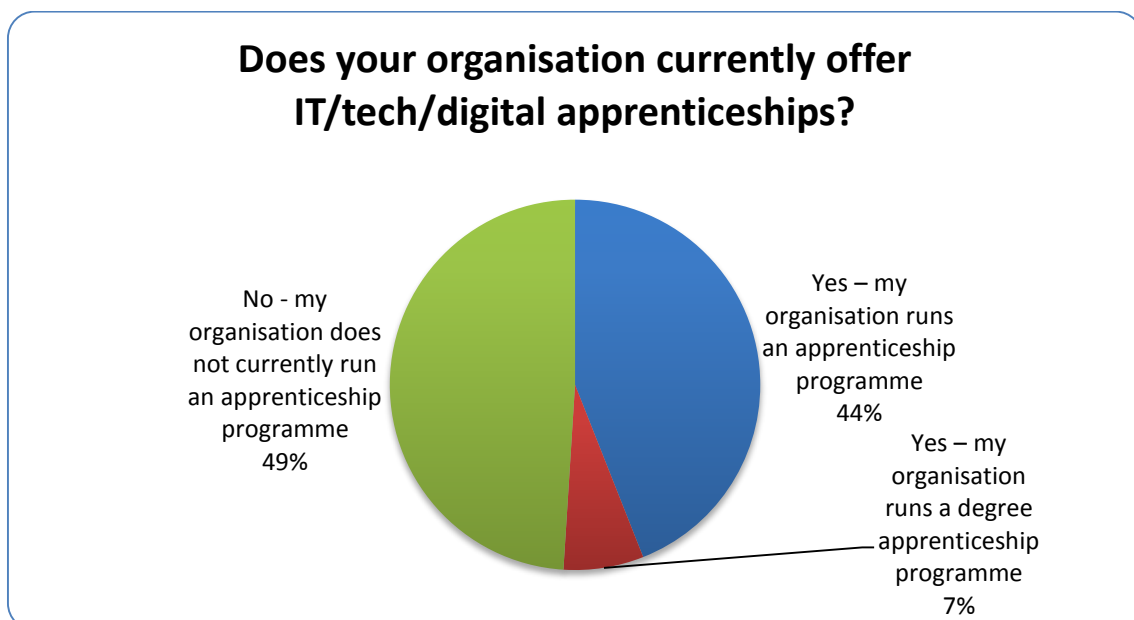


Respondents and Apprentice Numbers

61 employers completed the online survey. The survey ran between February and March 2016.



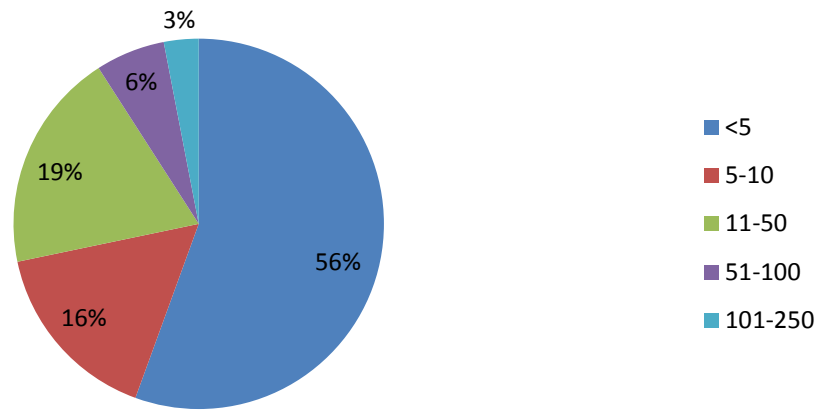
51% of employers that responded said they have already taken an apprentice, with 49% of employers yet to take this step.





Of those organisations that have taken on a tech/ digital apprentice in the last year, 44% have taken on 5 or more apprentices.

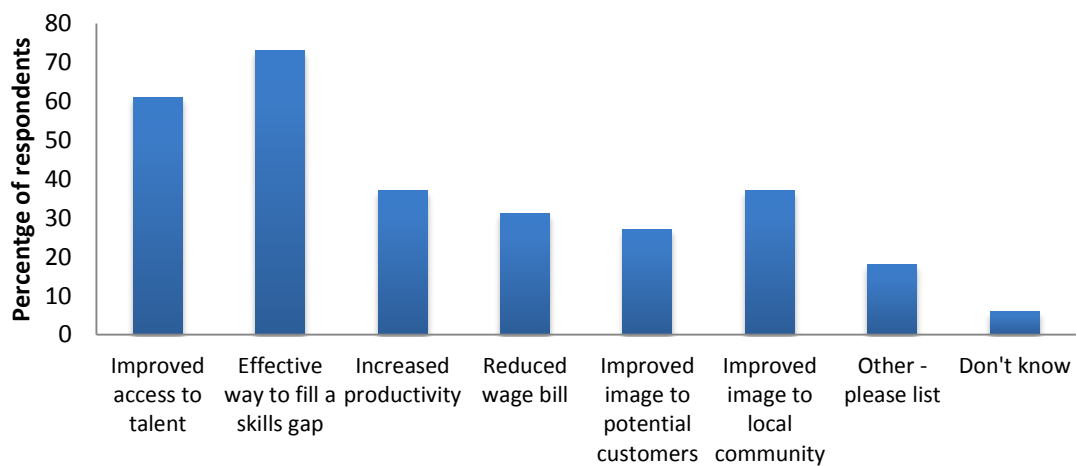
How many IT/ digital apprenticeships have you taken on in the past 12 months?



Apprentice programmes offer numerous benefits to employers

Employers outline that filling their digital/tech skills gaps (73%) and gaining access to talent (61%) are by far the biggest motivators for taking on an apprentice.

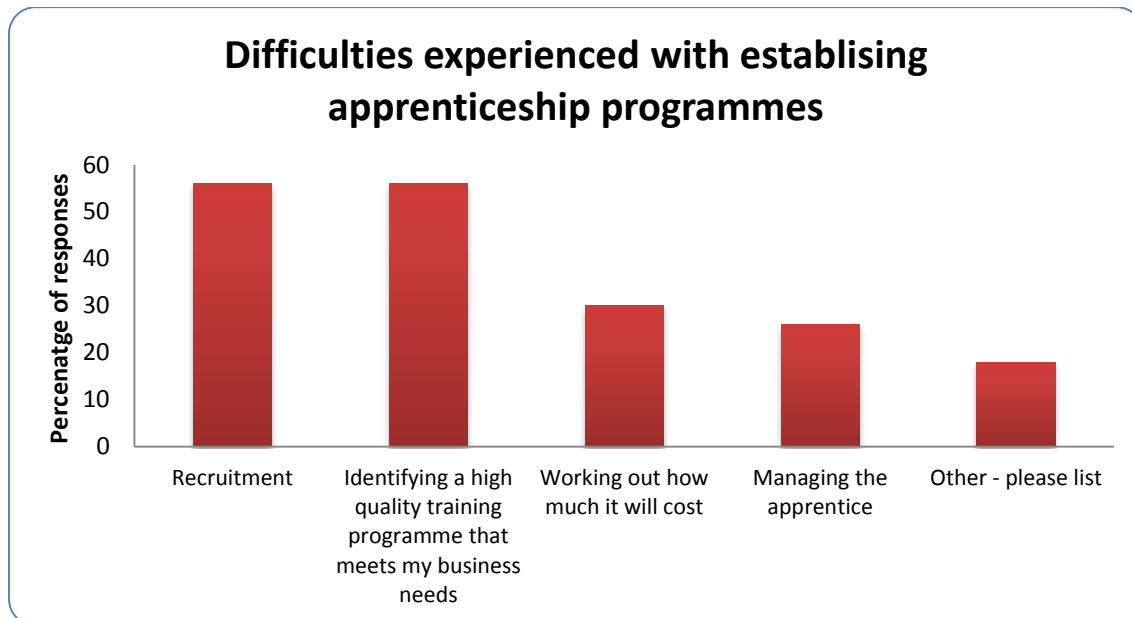
Key benefits from running apprenticeship programmes





Recruitment and training are seen as the main barriers to taking on apprentices

The two biggest challenges that employers face in running apprenticeship programmes are in recruiting apprentices (56%) and in sourcing high quality training for them (56%).



When employers who had not yet taken on an apprentice were asked what the main reasons were for not doing so, 39% responded that they 'did not know where to start'; 39% responded that they felt current apprenticeships frameworks do not correspond with their business needs; almost a quarter (24%) felt there was a lack of high quality training available to support a successful apprenticeship.

Table 1: Reasons for not yet taking an apprentice

Reasons for not yet taking an apprentice	Response (%)
No suitable roles in my business	33%
Not knowing where to start	39%
Insufficient good candidates	21%
The apprenticeship frameworks / standards that are currently available do not meet my business needs	39%
It's not easy to identify high quality training that meets my business needs	24%
There is a lack of high quality training that meets my business needs	21%
Other - please list	27%

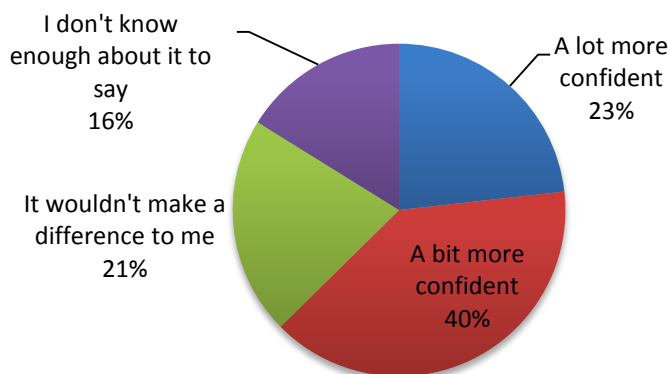


Employers value accredited training programmes as an assurance of quality

Only 23% of respondents said that they were very confident in finding appropriate training for their apprentice programme.

62% of respondents said that they would be more confident knowing that a training provider's apprentice programme had been accredited to a quality standard, such as that provided by the Tech Partnership.

Level of confidence in using a training provider with a programme accredited by the Tech Partnership

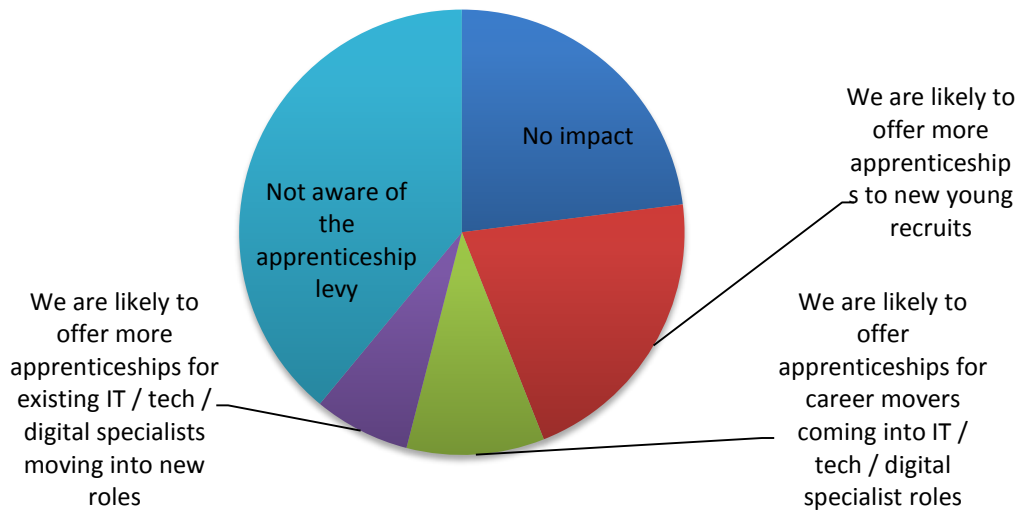


Employers expect to take on more apprentices when the levy comes into force

Of those employers who are aware of the levy, 62% said they are likely to take on more apprentices – either in the form of hiring young recruits or retraining existing staff - as a result of the introduction of the apprenticeship levy.



Perceived impact of the Apprenticeship Levy



When asked how employers perceive the apprenticeship levy will impact their organisation, 37% of respondents said that they think that it will prompt them to take more apprentices, mainly young people, but also those already in the workforce.

Conclusions

- 1 The UK faces severe shortages of skills that will ensure that the digital economy will thrive and prosper.
- 2 High quality digital apprenticeships are increasingly valued by employers, as a means by which these shortages can be alleviated.
- 3 This appetite for apprenticeships will only grow once the apprenticeship levy is introduced.
- 4 Many employers, however, do not feel confident that they know to find and train apprentices successfully.
- 5 The Tech Partnership is committed to making a difference by ensuring that young people have access to information about the benefits of a career in tech and the opportunities for tech and digital apprenticeships; and that employers know where to turn in ensuring that their apprentices receive high quality training and support.



THE TECH PARTNERSHIP

The Tech Partnership's Tech Industry Gold apprenticeships are designed and accredited by leading employers to ensure dedicated support for businesses and apprentices alongside relevant, world-class tech teaching.

Tech Industry Gold apprenticeship programmes are accredited by the Tech Partnership for their quality, focus on productivity and the level of support businesses receive.

To find out more about our gold-accreditation, and which Training Providers are running Tech Industry Gold accredited apprenticeship programmes, please go to

www.thetechpartnership.com/techindustrygold

The Tech Partnership is continually providing information about new apprenticeship developments, including new standards on our website. We are working with our network of employers to define the digital skills they need now and in the future, and shaping apprenticeship standards to meet these needs.

We have skilled staff that can assist you in your decisions around setting up a programme. To find out more and how to get in touch, please visit our website at

www.thetechpartnership.com

METHODOLOGY

This research was produced by the Tech Partnership, a network of employers, growing the skills for the digital economy.

The report was constructed by analysing the results of a survey of 61 employers carried on the Tech Partnership website between February and March 2016.

50% of respondents to the survey were SMEs (i.e. businesses with 250 or less employees).

44% of respondents were in tech/telecoms.

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