

# **Apprenticeships still overlooked by young people says new report**

Misconceptions around apprenticeships are still influencing the decisions of young people in their career paths, according to new research. The survey of more than 1,000 people across England found that more than half (51 per cent) of people aged between 18 and 24 still believed a university degree would make you more likely to earn a high salary than doing an apprenticeship.

The research also found that almost 49 per cent believed apprenticeships were better suited to those who did not get high enough grades to go to university.

The head of one West Midlands training provider branded the findings “disappointing but not surprising”.

BDO’s report also found that some respondents felt an apprenticeship could have a negative impact and more than a third (34 per cent) believed you were less likely to reach the most senior positions within a business if you did an apprenticeship rather than a university degree.

Almost two thirds (62 per cent) of respondents in the West Midlands and 61 per cent in the East Midlands said their school or college encouraged them to go to university rather than apply for an apprenticeship.

## **What is the Ladder for Greater Birmingham?**



The Ladder for Greater Birmingham [campaign launched in summer 2018](#) with the aim of creating new apprenticeships in Birmingham and Solihull by bringing candidates and training providers together with employers.

We have been supporting the project from day one as media partner and organiser of our annual apprenticeship awards in partnership with the Ladder.

Other stakeholders include Vine Trust, Performance Through People, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, Birmingham and Solihull Training Provider Network and West Midlands Combined Authority.

To get involved in the campaign visit [www.ladderforbirmingham.co.uk](http://www.ladderforbirmingham.co.uk) and read all of [our previous coverage here](#). You can contact the Ladder team on **03332 409 699** or by emailing [\*\*apprenticeships@ladderforbirmingham.co.uk\*\*](mailto:apprenticeships@ladderforbirmingham.co.uk)

Rob Colbourne is chief executive of West Midlands-based

training provider Performance Through People.

The firm is a partner in our Greater Birmingham Apprenticeship Awards, which take place in November and are open for entries now, and also the Ladder for Greater Birmingham campaign which is matching employers up with apprentices and training providers **(see factbox above)**.

Mr Colbourne said: “Although the findings from the recent BDO research regarding apprenticeships are disappointing, unfortunately they are not surprising. Colleagues who work in the apprenticeship arena have had decades of informing schools, teachers and parents that an apprenticeship isn’t a last resort.

“It has as much value as a university or college place and usually leads to at least a Level 3 qualification (2 A Levels) and can progress to a degree while earning a salary and not being left with several thousand pounds worth of educational debt. Many of the leaders in organisations we work with started off on an apprenticeship and huge brands such as HS2, Openreach, AF Blakemore and Jaguar Land Rover recruit utilising the apprenticeship levy.

“Although there are many educational establishments that do offer a fantastic information advice and guidance service to their students, many do not and see apprenticeships as a last resort rather than the fantastic opportunity they can offer. Until we have teachers who have gone through the apprenticeship route and a government that puts apprenticeships on an equal funding footing with colleges and universities, we will continue to have to fight our corner.”

## **Greater Birmingham Apprenticeship Awards 2022**

The Greater Birmingham Apprenticeship Awards is back for 2022

and [is now open for entries.](#)

The event will be held at Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham on **Friday November 11** and will celebrate apprentices, employers and training providers across a broad range of categories including our overall Apprentice of the Year.

[Click through here for all the details](#) and to enter before our deadline of **Friday September 23.**

Sponsorship opportunities are also now available – please email [paige.jackson@reachplc.com](mailto:paige.jackson@reachplc.com) for details or if you have any other questions and follow the hashtag **#GBAA** for updates on social media.

Sarah Hillary, a partner in BDO's digital and risk advisory services team, added: "Despite school leaver apprenticeships being a well-established route into many well-paid professions, including accountancy and law, our research demonstrates that there are still misconceptions about this career path.

"It is also concerning that more than a third believe doing an apprenticeship rather than a degree could be a barrier to reaching the most senior positions within a business. While a university education is still a highly regarded achievement, it can also bring a significant amount of debt and additional costs.

"As the cost-of-living crisis continues to take hold, university may not always be the most attractive or accessible route for young people, particularly those from a lower socio-economic background.

"With this in mind, it is important to not just increase the number of quality apprenticeship positions but also raise awareness of how this type of training can create meaningful, sustainable careers while giving the opportunity to earn while you learn. This would be a step in the right direction to

improving social mobility in the UK.”

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