



# Build the Future 2022 Apprenticeship Survey.

The Open University in  
partnership with The 5% Club

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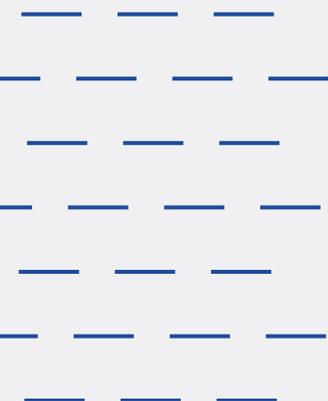
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# Forewords.

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**Once again, The 5% Club is delighted to partner with The Open University to deliver this new employer survey in England which provides great insight into employer attitudes and ambitions for apprenticeship growth into the coming year.**



The 5% Club – a UK wide charity with over six hundred employer members – exists to inspire positive employer action for increased and accessible workplace learning. We work tirelessly to ensure the skills system is optimised for growth and to meet the national skills need. As we emerge from the pandemic and look to “Build Back Better,” we would hope that every employer will be inspired and encouraged by

this research, draw their own insights, and then develop their own plans for growth, centred on apprenticeships. Founded on the principle of taking bold and innovative action to access areas of still untapped potential, we hope this creates a renewed focus on inclusive recruiting and talent management so crucial in this area.

The picture from employers as reported in this survey is encouragingly optimistic, with



88% of employers planning to maintain or increase the number of apprentices they hire in the next 12 months. And reassuringly, this is true across all sectors and in all regions. In construction, for example, 91% of employers plan to increase or maintain hires in the next 12 months, and in hospitality and leisure – which has had a tough time of late – the figure is 84%.

This very much echoes what we are seeing and hearing from our membership who want to make a massive difference in creating earn and learn opportunities across the workforce. Our own recent “Employer Audit” research underlines their performance and attitudes. In 2021, we saw a 15% rise in the numbers of apprentices recruited, with 75% of our research participants planning further increases in 2022/23. And worthy of special note, our SME members (who comprise 60% of our movement) are delivering the highest percentages of apprenticeships and planned growth.

So, 2022 has the potential to build on the recovery and for employers to invest in their employee skills development to boost and build their business, aided by this research and driven forward by their own ambition and energy.

**Mark Cameron OBE**

**Chief Executive, The 5% Club**

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**National Apprenticeship Week is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate everything that is great about apprenticeships.**

It is a powerful week where the entire apprenticeship community unites to share and celebrate the many benefits that apprenticeships bring to individuals, employers and wider society.

In relation to this report, I have been particularly encouraged that so many of those surveyed think apprenticeships help boost social mobility and diversity in the workforce. However, it is stark that some employers – whilst recognising the benefits – don't yet have plans to recruit apprentices from a diverse range of backgrounds.

The data, for example, shows that whilst a majority believe that apprenticeships are helpful in recruiting more care leavers into the workplace (52%), only 37% have plans to actively recruit this group in the future. Even more stark is that whilst 55% of employers believe that apprenticeships are an important tool to support more people with declared disabilities in the workplace, only 18% plan to hire from those groups.

This is something that is not a shock to us – the pandemic has meant that many businesses have had to re-prioritise their recruitment plans. In the early days of the pandemic, we saw many employers cancel or postpone their plans to use apprenticeships to widen access and support the levelling up agenda. However the economy, and apprenticeship recruitment, are in a different place now and we need to do more to get



us back on the right path. There's certainly some good practice out there already, which we want to see mainstreamed.

Here at Amazing Apprenticeships, we are keen to support more employers to translate their intent into action through the recruitment and retention of apprentices from a wide variety of backgrounds – whether that be different ethnicities, genders, care leavers, disabilities or those with low prior attainment. The Genie programme is a big part of that strategy.

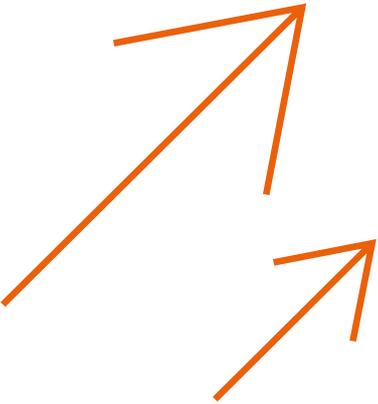
## **Anna Morrison**

**Director and Founder,  
Amazing Apprenticeships**

### **THE GENIE PROGRAMME**

Founded by Amazing Apprenticeships in 2021, empowers apprenticeship employers to explore social mobility, diversity and inclusion to affect real, tangible change in their organisation.





# The Build the Future Apprenticeship Survey.

**In December 2021, The Open University (OU) commissioned a survey of employers in England about their plans to ‘Build The Future’ through apprenticeships.**

The research was undertaken by YouGov who surveyed large and small businesses (excluding microbusinesses) from across the public, private and third sectors.

The aim of the Build the Future Apprenticeship Survey was to understand changing attitudes and approaches to apprenticeships and skills development in England, and how employers see them as being a key role in building a diverse and skilled workforce, helping them grow their own talent and plug skills gaps.

This survey also formed part of an OU and The 5% Club event in National Apprenticeship Week 2022 in association with Amazing Apprenticeships where an expert panel discussed the findings and offered practical tips to make apprenticeships central to building the future as we emerge from the pandemic.

## KEY FINDINGS

# Apprenticeships as a vehicle to recovery.

Of those **603** (45%) organisations polled who currently hire or have previously hired apprentices,

**88%**

plan to maintain or increase the number of apprentices they hire in the next 12 months.

**12%**

plan to hire fewer apprentices.

Amongst the small businesses polled (organisations with **249** employees or fewer),

**81%**

plan to maintain or increase the number of apprentices they hire in the next 12 months. This positive response from SMEs is encouraging, although

**19%**

report that they plan to hire fewer apprentices.



The appetite to hire more apprentices over the coming year varies between different sectors. The sectors most likely to maintain or increase their apprenticeship numbers are in education, financial services, IT and telecoms and construction. The sectors least likely to are media/marketing/advertising/PR and sales, hospitality and

leisure and transportation and distribution – although they still report strong support for apprenticeships and still hope to maintain or increase apprentice numbers next year. It seems the sectors who are not planning on hiring quite as many apprentices are many of the sectors who were hardest hit by the impact of Covid-19.



**100%**  
Education

**95%**  
Financial services

**92%**  
IT and telecoms

**91%**  
Construction

**89%**  
Medical and health services

**88%**  
Real estate

**86%**  
Manufacturing

**85%**  
Retail

**85%**  
Accountancy

**83%**  
Legal

**84%**  
Transportation and distribution

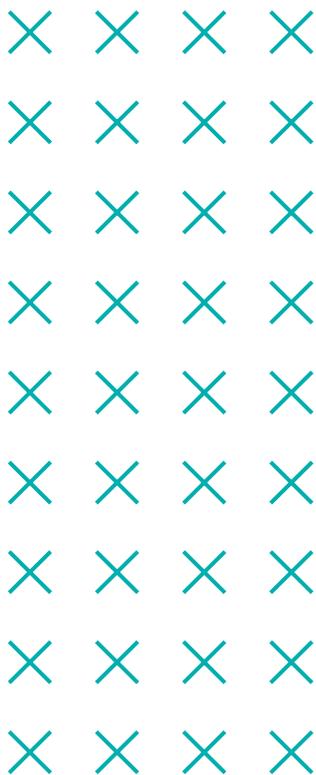
**84%**  
Hospitality and leisure

**74%**  
Media / marketing / advertising / PR and sales

KEY FINDINGS

# Positive sentiment and building the future.

Of those organisations polled who currently hire or have previously hired apprentices...



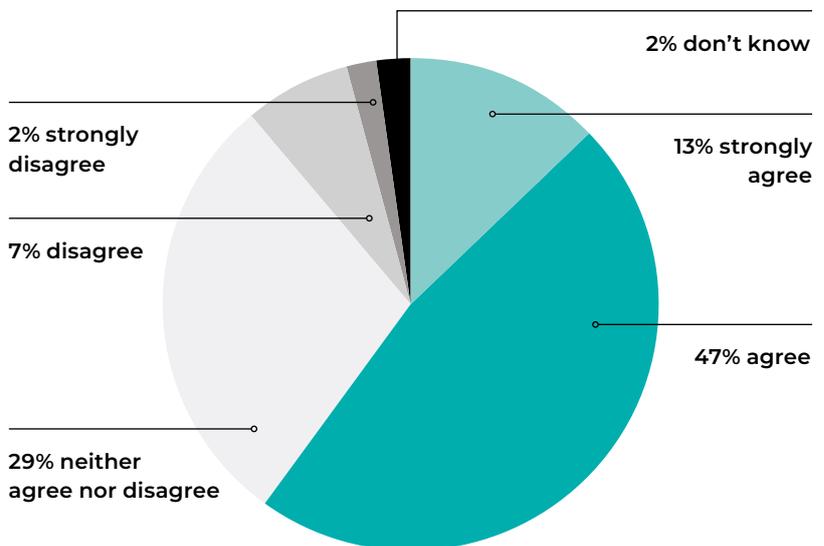
59%

believe they have allowed their organisation pro actively build its future.

53%

of SMEs also reported this.

Apprenticeship have allowed my organisation to pro actively build its future.



# 69%

reported that they have had a transformative impact on the learner.

# 59%

said it helped their organisation get the skills they need.

# 41%

reported increased agility in their organisation.



The survey shows that senior leaders such as Managing Directors and Owners are more positive towards the benefits of apprenticeships than middle managers.

For example, more middle managers reported 'don't know' as to whether apprenticeships are vital to their organisation's recovery – with only 44%

agreeing that they were vital to their organisation's recovery compared to 68% of Managing Directors and Owners.

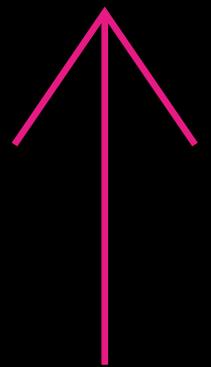
This is perhaps because senior leaders can see the long-term strategic value of apprenticeships compared to the middle managers who need to balance the day-to-day delivery of them.





## KEY FINDINGS

# Where next for diversity and inclusion?



The polling showed that there is a lot of positive sentiment around apprenticeships and their ability to boost diversity and widen access in the workplace.

Apprenticeships remain a vital tool in widening talent and opportunity for under-represented groups, and under-represented geographies ('cold spots').



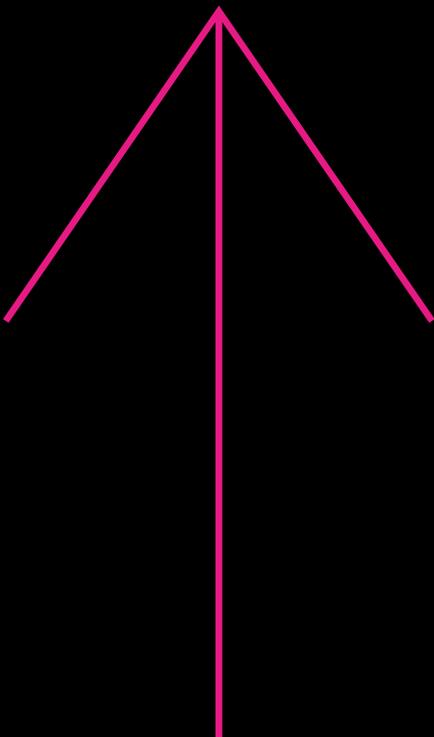
Of those organisations polled who currently hire or have previously hired apprentices...

68%

of organisations said that apprenticeships are important to support individuals from lower-social economic backgrounds to enter the workplace.

75%

of those surveyed reported that apprenticeships are important to help hire people without degrees or with low prior attainment.





55%

report that they are important to support more people with declared disabilities into the workforce or to progress their careers.

46%

said that they are important to support more people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds into the workforce or to progress their careers.

61%

believed apprenticeships should be for all ages and

70%

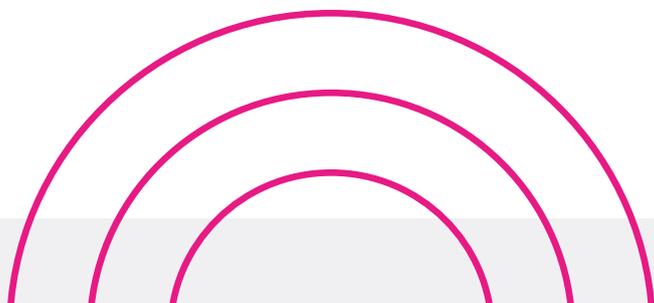
believed they should be available at all Levels.

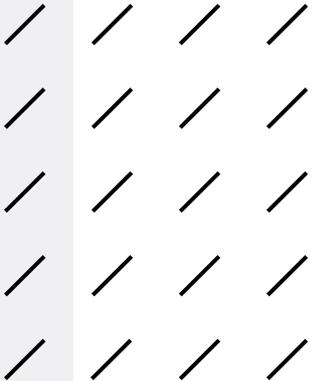
However, when it comes to translating this intent and positive sentiment around widening access into action, only

31%

of employers were planning on recruiting apprentices from lower socio-economic groups in the future (compared to 68% believing that apprenticeships are important for this group).

In addition, whilst 75% believe they are important for people with low prior attainment, only 34% plan to hire people from those groups in the future.





Even more stark is that, whilst

55%

of employers believe that they are an important tool to support more people with declared disabilities in the workplace, only 18% plan to specifically hire more apprentices with declared disability in the future. Similarly, 42% think they are important for ex-offenders,

but only 5% plan to hire them in the next 12 months. 52% believe they are important for care leavers, and

37%

plan to hire them in the future.

Amongst SMEs, the intent to hire people from these groups is slightly lower than larger employers.

## Employer sentiment versus employer plans

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Apprenticeships are important...

Which, if any, of the following audiences are your organisation actively looking to recruit more apprentices from in the future?

To support individuals from **lower-socio economic backgrounds** to enter the workplace

68%

31%

To help hire people **without degrees or with low prior attainment**

75%

34%

To support more people with **declared disabilities** into the workforce or to progress their careers

55%

18%

To support more people from **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds** into the workforce or to progress their careers

46%

30%

To support more **ex-offenders** into the workforce or to progress in their careers

42%

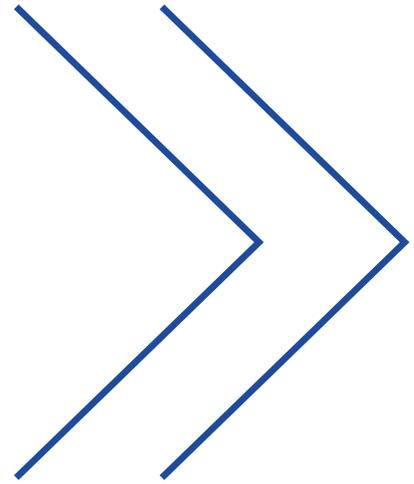
5%

To support more **care-leavers** into the workforce or to progress in their careers

52%

13%





# Turning intent into action.

## **Employers – across all sectors and regions – clearly recognise the transformative impacts of apprenticeships.**

They can make a big difference to the organisation, the learner and their communities. In particular, it is encouraging to see so many SMEs also reporting the value of them.

Looking to the future, employers are hoping to do more to recruit apprentices from a wider variety of backgrounds and we hope that they can work in partnership with providers and third-party groups to share best practice and turn that intent into action.

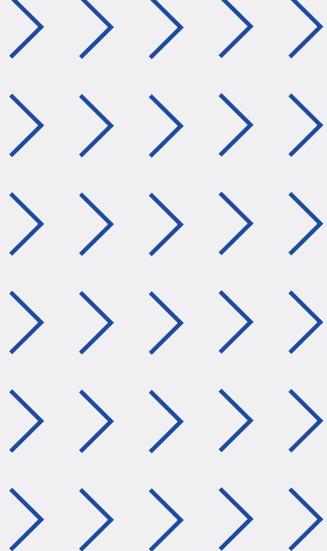
In particular, it is recommended that employers examine the new resources toolkit on widening

access to apprenticeships by the Social Mobility Commission speak with Amazing Apprenticeships about how their Genie programme can maybe assist, or indeed discuss with The 5% Club their new Employer Audit recognition awards.



### **RESOURCES TOOLKIT**

[socialmobilityworks.org/  
wp-content/uploads/2021/10/  
SMC-Apprenticeships-Toolkit.pdf](https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SMC-Apprenticeships-Toolkit.pdf)



# Fola's story.

“ Never give up on your dreams.



Fola is one of the first Nursing Associates to qualify through an OU apprenticeship. After spending her childhood watching her mother provide care in her community in Nigeria, Fola is proud to be carrying on the family tradition following her move to the UK in 2007.

With three children to look after, finding a flexible way to achieve her ambitions was vital for Fola. She signed up for a Nursing Associate Higher Apprenticeship

at the Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust's Nursing Academy.

It allowed Fola to learn whilst she earned, gain practical skills, and become a registered Nursing Associate with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.



To read more about Fola's story visit [open.ac.uk/business/news/apprenticeship-week-stories-fola](https://open.ac.uk/business/news/apprenticeship-week-stories-fola)



# Martyn's story.

“ The apprenticeship is lighting that fire inside again.

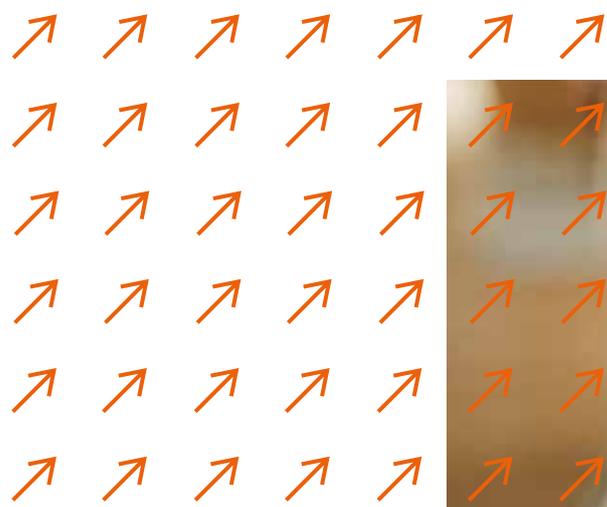


Martyn has dyslexia and so he found school very difficult, which he left aged 16. After school, he joined the army where we stayed for 23 years before working for South Western Railway later in his career.

He's now undertaking the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, which for him includes getting his Level 2 Maths and English, something the OU has helped him with, alongside support for his dyslexia challenges.



To read more about Martyn's story visit [open.ac.uk/business/knowledge-hub/degree-apprentice-building-new-career](https://open.ac.uk/business/knowledge-hub/degree-apprentice-building-new-career)



# About The Open University.

**The Open University (OU) has a rich heritage of providing workplace education solutions for employers across a range of sectors, which help employees unlock their potential and since 2016, the OU has offered apprenticeships to help organisations grow their own talent.**

In England, the OU offers higher and degree-level programmes in healthcare, policing, social work, digital, management and leadership. In Wales, the OU offers degree apprenticeships and in Scotland, Graduate Apprenticeships.

Whether you're looking to develop new or current employees, contact the OU today to find out how apprenticeships can help you build your future.





**FIND OUT MORE**

[open.ac.uk/business  
/apprenticeships](https://open.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships)



# About The 5% Club.



The 5% Club is a dynamic movement of employers committed to earn and learn as part of building and developing the workforce they need as part of a socially mobile, prosperous and cohesive nation.



The Club exists to help its members and all employers increase further the number, quality and range of earn and learn opportunities across the UK.

By joining The 5% Club, members aspire to achieve 5% of their workforce in earn and learn positions (including apprentices,

sponsored students and graduates on formalised training schemes) within five years of joining.



**FIND OUT MORE**  
[5percentclub.org.uk](https://5percentclub.org.uk)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[amazingapprenticeships.com](https://amazingapprenticeships.com)



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