

## This Government makes much of the Apprenticeship programme. But what does it actually entail ?

- Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on and off the JOB training. A successful apprentice will receive a nationally recognised qualification on completion of their contract.
- Apprenticeships can be set up for at least one year to no more than four years.
- They have to be paid at the minimum wage at least.

**This table sets out some basic statistics covering the past five years for Government funded schemes.**

Age	2009/10	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13	2013/4
Under 19	109	122	122	108	112
19-24	107	134	150	153	148
OVER 25.	45	169	212	213	149
<b>Totals</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>410</b>

Numbers in thousands

### How many women take up apprenticeships?

The age distribution is one aspect of the new apprenticeship schemes . It is also interesting that the gender balance now favours females at 53% of the total in 2014/15

### What about the trend in numbers?

Well. the numbers rose from 280,000 in 2009 'to 520,000 in 2012 and have been falling ever since.

### What about the age at which apprenticeships start?

Well Under 19 years old starts have risen by 3% and are now 27% of all apprenticeships

19-24 year old starts have risen by 40% and are now 36% “ “ “

25+ year old starts have risen by 229% and are now 37% “ “ “

### Where are all these apprentices?

Three quarters of them are in the services sector ( Business administration and law took more than half. .retail and commercial sectors with Health care took the total to 73% of all starts in 2013/4  
A total of 384,000 Engineering took 66,000; construction just 14,0000

It is, perhaps, not such a success story as is suggested by the Tories.

Whilst these “apprentices” do have to have a registered course of instruction with an experienced worker and a formal education element at a College it is difficult to find out how this differs from the day release schemes that were a central part of the Tecs and Colleges of previous years. The main difference is that we call these trainees “apprentices” and pay the Employer £1,500 per “apprentice as a subsidy. Note young apprentices are paid at the minimum wage which is £2.65 per hour. Older workers get the minimum adult wage.

The areas of the Economy which are in great need of Good training and skills development do not figure very prominently in the Apprenticeship data I have seen.

What I see is “skills shortages in engineering , construction and manufacturing. The Engineering industry states that we need 1,820,000 new skilled workers by 2022 .That is double the numbers that we have today. Half of the new recruits today do not have the skills needed in the industry and 60% of firms in the Industry express concern that they will be unable to compete in Global markets unless this shortfall is addressed

What I see are “apprenticeships” in MacDonaldis and Pizza Express and in the £ shop.

**Here are some of the skills you will learn on this apprenticeship:**

To process customer orders for goods in a retail environment. To work effectively in a retail team

Process returned goods and materials in a retail environment. Process customer orders

Improve the customer relationships. Help to manage a retail team

Monitor and solve customer problems. Choose merchandise to feature in visual merchandising displays

**N.B This is a list of the requirement and goals for a retail apprenticeship scheme..**

**Training generally.**

The best data source for investment in training is the Employer Skills Survey, which estimates that total employer investment in training in England was £33.3 bn in 2005, and £40.5 bn in 2011. Once inflation is factored in, this represents just a 4% increase, and since the workforce expanded during the interval it represents a real terms cut of 14.5% in training investment per worker.

Another factor to consider is the gradual change in the composition of the economy. Some high-tech industries, which routinely invested a lot in training, such as oil & gas, are now in decline. While manufacturing is just about holding its own in terms of value, capital-labour substitution (i.e. higher productivity) means that headcount continues to fall, so the quantum of high-skill training days reduces. Service industries tend to invest less in formal training (and apprenticeships) and rely more on “on the job” coaching.

Conclusion. Stories about the great success of the Tory Long Term Plan in the Labour Market are short on detail and misleading . They emphasise quantity over quality and disguise a real problem in the decline of skills and nature and rewards for work.

