

Creating an inclusive Apprenticeship Offer

This report was commissioned by the Apprenticeships Unit which is a cross department unit working across the Department for Education and Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

This report aims to give an informed and up-to-date description and analysis of the issues related to the inclusion of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Apprenticeship provision.

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(Assisted by Robert Holland)
January 2012

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Foreword

This Report has been compiled and written in 2011/12 and examines the evidence and issues, relating to the aspiration of creating an “inclusive apprenticeship offer” for young people aged 16-24 who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). It draws on a number of documents and developments over recent years, and specifically builds on the unpublished report: “Through Inclusion to Apprenticeships”, prepared for the Learning and Skills Council in January, 2010. It provides the most thorough and detailed analysis of recent and relevant data as well as consideration of current Government policy objectives and other information from reports, visits and interviews.

When I chaired the strategic review of LSC-funded provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the issues concerning work-related learning and employment came through strongly. The final report of that review, *Through Inclusion to Excellence* (LSC, 2005), contained analysis and recommendations, including one that urged the LSC “to introduce appropriate performance indicators for participation and achievement of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities engaged in Apprenticeships” (LSC, 2005: 36). So these are long-standing issues, and it is extremely timely to be examining the current situation in the context of a re-defined Apprenticeship Offer in the Education Act, 2011.

Since 2005 there has been a significant increase in overall apprenticeship numbers, with a grand total of 442,700 in 2010/11 of which 35,600 (8%) declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. Although more Apprentices declared LDD compared to 2005/06 (19,200), the proportion reduced over this period from 11.1% to 8%, with successive reductions in the past 3 years. Moreover, there have been particularly sharp reductions in the proportion of 19-24 year old Apprentices with a LDD, and as this is the cohort which is prioritised in the current “redefined Offer”, this report considers the implications and makes some important recommendations.

This report needs to be seen in three contexts. In relation to young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the SEN and Disability Green Paper (March, 2011) proposes a radical approach, including a single assessment process from “birth to 25”. This builds on the long established policy of accepting the need for some extended support for learners with LDD up to the age of 25. Chapter 4: “Preparing for adulthood” has a clear focus on improved employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, in a cross government context. A second context must be the current economic turbulence and the increased number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Young disabled people are twice as likely to be NEET aged 16-18 compared to their non-disabled peers and three times as likely aged 19-24. Thirdly, there is a major focus on moving disabled people away from benefits and into employment wherever possible. All of these must be considered in the apprenticeship context.

I have been closely involved in promoting the needs of these young people in a wide range of training and employment issues for 25 years at national as well as local levels. I have been greatly encouraged by the interest and commitment of ministers and officials in recent times and I sense a real determination to improve access to apprenticeships for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is set against the reality of a difficult economic and business climate, and we do need to promote the positive ways in which disabled apprentices can contribute to business success, including “bottom line” features. The “redefined apprenticeship offer” makes a key commitment to prioritising these young people with LDD up to the age of 25, once they have been offered an apprenticeship place. The recommendations in this report, if adopted, would underpin the offer, and would seize the opportunity to move this agenda forward whilst arresting the recent decline in the proportion of young people with LDD in apprenticeships.

Any success will come through close partnership working, as advocated in the SEN Green Paper: “Support and aspiration” (March, 2011) and partnership working will be a key to equal access to apprenticeships. This includes providers and a range of partners, including organisations led by disabled people. The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is demonstrating its determination to promote this and is supporting a range of initiatives. The Government’s Apprenticeship Unit has on-going dialogue with stakeholders in a “Learners with LDD Reference Group”. However, other Government departments, agencies as well as other partners will need to play their part if we are to make a reality of this aspiration.

I am immensely grateful for the goodwill and contributions of many organisations and individuals who have assisted in this report. Above all, I wish to pay tribute to Robert Holland, without whose dedicated knowledge and professionalism this report would not have been completed. Robert began this work whilst working for Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities before Skill closed in April, 2011. He has continued to assist me in completing the work. In all respects, however, I take responsibility for its contents and recommendations, and sincerely hope it will help us all to move forward the aspiration of a truly inclusive apprenticeship offer.

Peter Little, OBE
January, 2012

Executive summary and recommendations

This report, commissioned by the Government's Apprenticeship Unit provides an up to date survey of data and evidence from a range of sources relating to participation and success of young people aged 16-24 who declare a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) in apprenticeships.

A decline in the proportion of Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability

The total number of Apprentices has risen substantially between 2005/6 and 2010/11 from 175,000 to 442,700. The number of Apprentices declaring a LDD has also risen during the same period from 19,200 to 35,600.

However the proportion declaring an LDD has fallen significantly from 11.1% to 8%.

For the 16-18 cohort 11.9% declared an LDD in 2005/6. This fell to 10% in 2010/11. The 19-24 cohort causes particular concern where the proportion has fallen alarmingly to 7.9% in 2010/11.

Within the overall cohort there is cause for concern among specific groups. Both the numbers and proportion of Apprentices declaring a moderate learning difficulty for example have fallen significantly as have those with visual impairments and multiple disabilities. We can also see a decline in both the proportion and numbers of those declaring in the category 'other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes).' The range of learning difficulties and disabilities is very wide and appropriate interventions will vary. However, the detailed data could be valuable in addressing issues and reversing trends amongst groups who could benefit from the offer.

Success rates

The success rates of Apprentices completing their framework has risen considerably between 2005/6 (55.3%) and 2010/11 (73.8%). The success rates for Apprentices declaring LDD has also risen during the same period from 49.5% to 69.9%.

This rise in success rates for Apprentices declaring LDD is extremely positive and has narrowed the attainment gap with their non-disabled peers. Promotion of this figure should certainly go some way to addressing the perception that disabled people are significantly less likely to succeed in their framework. It is important to dispel the myth that apprentices with LDD are unlikely to succeed.

The data also shows that Apprentices with LDD aged 19+ are more likely to complete successfully their framework. Thus a 16-18 year old has a success rate of 67.1%, a 19-24 year old 71.1% and a 25+ Apprentice 75%.

Success rates for those with mental ill health, emotional/behavioural difficulties, multiple learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties are consistently lower than other groups and there should be a focus on supporting these groups to achieve in line with their peers.

Frameworks

Lessons can be learned from popular frameworks such as Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy where the numbers of Apprentices declaring an LDD are relatively high along with participation. In addition there has been a consistent rise in the number of Apprentices declaring LDD on the competitive Plumbing framework, and is worth noting.

We must also look further at the frameworks where participation has fallen. For example Retail, Child Care, learning and development and Health and Social Care have also shown marked proportionate declines.

Success rates for Apprentices declaring an LDD vary considerably between the frameworks and it would be fruitful if NAS, Sector Skills Councils and others could reflect on frameworks such as Active Leisure and Learning as well as Business Administration where numbers are high and they have shown a considerable rise in success rates.

Tackling the decline

In order to tackle the decline in participation of Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) action is needed. It must be recognised that ultimately employers must be encouraged to consider the positive merits of recruiting disabled Apprentices. However incentivising the system will give providers confidence to take on disabled people, support them appropriately and promote them to employers. It will even give the flexibility for some providers with appropriate skills to specialise in this area.

Currently whilst providers receive 100% of their training costs to cover 16–18 year olds, they receive funding at only 50% for 19-24 year olds. This needs to change because time and again providers and stakeholders have reported that learners with LDD are more likely to be 'Apprenticeship ready' in the 19-24 age range.

This report proposes that Apprentices with LDD aged 19-24 should be funded at the fully funded (16-18) rate. While this would be an additional cost to the Skills Funding Agency it represents a huge saving in comparison to the drawn down in a lifetime of benefits.

Furthermore, if the new duty in the Education Act 2011 relating to the apprenticeship offer for young people aged 19-24 who have a learning difficulty and/or disability is to be meaningful and effective, such a provision would be justified and essential.

Funding to support Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability

Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) are entitled to support through Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or Additional Social Needs (ASN). In addition they are entitled to Access to Work (AtW) as employees, which pays for on the job support for disabled people.

Currently few employers draw down AtW while providers have reported that the highly bureaucratic nature of ALN and ASN means it is not always claimed and in some cases dissuades providers from taking on those who have more severe or challenging needs.

The issue is even more pertinent as entitlement to ALN and/or ASN is part of the eligibility criteria for the new Apprenticeship Access Strand, something which could and should be an important route into Apprenticeships for learners with LDD.

Key Skills and Functional Skills

An important issue identified by stakeholders were difficulties in completing the Level 1 Key Skills and Functional Skills elements of the frameworks. This was particularly the case in the literacy and numeracy elements of Key Skills and the English and maths elements of Functional Skills.

This issue is particularly important in context of the recent Government announcement that from the 2012/13 academic year providers must support Apprentices to progress towards the achievement of Level 2 English and maths.

There are also issues facing Apprentices with LDD with regard to accessing the assessment process both in terms of Key Skills but also Functional Skills which is to replace the former. Stakeholders described how reasonable adjustments were not always made by assessment centres. In addition Apprentices with LDD are often disadvantaged due to the fact these qualifications are assessed out of context. Thus an Apprentice working to the vocabulary and numeracy associated with a particular job may find it difficult to relate to a completely different set of language and numbers presented during assessment.

Many providers and Apprentices described the importance of 1:1 support particularly with regard to the literacy and numeracy/English and maths elements of the framework and this is critical for many to succeed.

On the job support and working with employers and third sector

On the job support both in terms of job coaching but also mentoring is critical to success for Apprentices with an LDD. Mentoring has been shown to be particularly effective for Apprentices with LDD, some of whom may have limited experience of the workplace, while others may have difficulties integrating themselves into a team. Mentors are also important in that they can monitor progress and spot signs of distress or simply where the Apprentice might be struggling.

Structured job coaching is crucial for some and its availability through Access to Work must be promoted.

More work needs to be done with employers in terms of their knowledge with regards disability and learning difficulties in general, but also the support that is available to them. This is particularly pertinent because in the current economic climate some employers may perceive taking on disabled people as Apprentices as more costly. A recurrent theme raised by stakeholders was the need to promote good practice examples among employers to demonstrate the value of taking on Apprentices with LDD.

It is clear that innovative new models have been developed by the Third Sector (including organisations led by disabled people) and funded by the National Apprenticeship Service, which are successfully supporting Apprentices with LDD to succeed. These need to be promoted and offered as good practice examples for others in the Third Sector, Public and independent sectors to take forward.

Routes into Apprenticeships

Crucial to increasing participation in Apprenticeships for learners with LDD is the 'pre-Apprenticeship offer.' Learners with LDD have historically made up a sizeable proportion of those participating on Programme Led Apprenticeships (PLA). These have been seen by many as an important route into a full Apprenticeship for this cohort.

PLAs are now being phased out and an Access Strand was introduced in August 2011, which is focused on those young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) and/or entitled to Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or Additional Social Needs (ASN) funding. Stakeholders described how in order to work for learners with LDD the eligibility for the Access Strand must be broadened to allow transition from Foundation Learning (FL) as well as those who are designated NEET.

Stakeholders also described the importance of the wider offer. The flexibility of the former e2e (entry to employment) provision could be very useful in the journey towards an apprenticeship, and it remains important that FL retains the flexibility to be personalised for learners with LDD.

Important evidence in building effective routes into Apprenticeships is beginning to emerge from pilots funded by the National Apprenticeships Service. Initial findings show that Apprenticeships need to be promoted as a viable option directly to disabled people themselves and their families, This is particularly the case for the 16-18 cohort, recruitment of which is proving challenging. In addition pilots have again highlighted the importance or mentoring as well as effective brokerage with employers.

Recommendations

The recommendations are listed throughout the report, however they are also listed below.

Recommendation 1: Improve Individualised Learner Record self-declaration methods so that all disabilities and learning difficulties can be recorded.

Recommendation 2: The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) should monitor carefully the numbers of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability and respond to trends accordingly.

Recommendation 3: Particular focus should be applied to address the decline in Apprenticeship starts for those with moderate learning difficulties, visual impairments, and medical conditions (such as epilepsy, asthma, diabetes).

Recommendation 4: In devising a strategy for promoting good practice it may be prudent to look at the experiences within the West Midlands and target good practice promotion to other less successful areas.

Recommendation 5: Look at how good practice might be shared specifically around supporting Apprentices with mental ill health, emotional/behavioural difficulties, profound and complex disabilities and multiple disabilities.

Recommendation 6: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and NAS should work actively to promote the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards England (SASE) information requirement which highlights the importance of accessibility and flexibility, to employers, providers and others involved in creating Apprenticeship frameworks.

Recommendation 7: Work should be undertaken by NAS to address the very low level of applicants declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability during the application process for the online vacancy matching service.

Recommendation 8: The Apprenticeship Unit should liaise with the relevant bodies, such as JISC TechDis, to explore and promote alternative platforms, applications and solutions such as multi-media and accessible digital portfolios.

Recommendation 9: The self-declaration process must be reviewed and improved so that information regarding learning difficulties and/or disabilities is correctly disclosed and recorded.

Recommendation 10: Urgent consideration should be given to reform the funding methodology for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Additional Social Needs (ASN) including existing arrangements for

exceptional support, including review of Learning and Skills Network recommendations.

Recommendation 11: Completion criteria for English and maths in Intermediate Apprenticeship frameworks must not be set at level 2.

Recommendation 12: The Apprenticeships Unit should communicate to Awarding Organisations through Ofqual and others that reasonable adjustments must be made to both Key Skills and Functional Skills in line with the Equality Act 2010 and that the assessment contextualised for those that require it.

Recommendation 13: One-to-one support for those that require it must be in place to support Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in completing the Key / Functional Skills part of their framework.

Recommendation 14: Consideration should be given to moving completion rates for Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities outside of Minimum Level of Performance targets. This would remove the disincentive currently facing providers.

Recommendation 15: Ensure that funding is flexible to fund job coaches for those Apprentices that need it.

Recommendation 16: NAS should encourage employers to seek to recruit Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by promoting the “redefined offer”. As part of this NAS should highlight the support available as well as the importance of mentors.

Recommendation 17: Explore with organisations led by disabled people and other third sector organisations how innovative new models of Apprenticeships might be developed and funded.

Recommendation 18: NAS and partners should promote case studies of individual Apprentices and the support they have received.

Recommendation 19: Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the 19-24 cohort should be funded at the fully funded (16-18) rate. This will be crucial in meeting the duty laid out in the Apprenticeship Offer in the Education Act 2011.

Recommendation 20: Learners with LDD must be seen as a priority group within the Access Strand. Eligibility for the Access Strand should be based on a declaration of LDD, based on Equality Act 2010 definition, and not whether or not the learner is eligible for ALN, ASN or whether they have been NEET for 13 weeks.

Chapter 1 Background and context

This report covers issues and developments that have emerged from work done over the past year two years to examine how people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to participate and succeed in Apprenticeships. In this report, unless otherwise stated, it refers to the full range of self-declared Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).

It updates the report 'Through Inclusion to Apprenticeships' submitted to the Learning and Skills Council in January 2010.¹ It is informed by the Statistical First Release (SFR), which includes data from 2005/6 up to the provisional final data from 2010/11.

Colleagues from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) have provided a breakdown of data specific to Apprentices with LDD, based on this SFR.

Several recent strategies, reports and pieces of research have touched on issues relating to Apprenticeships with LDD. These will be summarised and referenced in this report as appropriate. In addition Appendix A contains a bibliography.

Chapter 5 contains consideration of commitments made by ministers during the passage of the Education Act 2011 in both houses of Parliament, as well as the final wording of the Act which received royal assent in December 2011 and the accompanying explanatory notes.

A wide range of stakeholders have been consulted in the drafting of this report with views from public and independent training providers, employers, voluntary sector organisations as well as disabled people themselves. A range of themes emerged, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

This report welcomes the measures to prioritise young people with LDD aged 16-24 in the redefined Offer, and offers some key recommendations to assist implementation as well as providing detailed data and analysis.

¹ The Learning and Skills Council was abolished in 2009 and replaced with two successor bodies, the Young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency.

Chapter 2 Data and statistical analysis

Before considering the detailed data that is now available, it needs to be remembered that unlike data for, say, gender, this data is based on a self-declaration of learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) and this affects its reliability. Thus some people prefer not to declare a disability for fear of discrimination while others may not consider themselves disabled. There is some anecdotal feedback to suggest that others may be declaring a 'learning difficulty' where in fact the issue is one of basic skills needs.

Much work has been done in recent years to enable learners to make meaningful and accurate disability declarations. As a generalisation, general further education colleges tend to be better resourced and knowledgeable with regard to this. However some Apprenticeship providers admit to finding it difficult to support the self- declaration process.

In analysing the data by type of disability, it is important to remember that the learner declares his or her main disability under the L15 field of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and does not record a second disability if that has a lesser impact. Only where a learner has two or more disabilities that are considered to have an equal impact are they recorded as 'multiple.' It is likely therefore that in some cases at least, any additional disabilities that Apprentices may have are not recorded. The same applies to the L16 field of for apprentices with learning difficulties.

We need to remember that LDD covers a very wide range of impairments, and in particular that for many it is not intellectual. In the same way that many with LDD flourish in higher education, where there are significant mechanisms and adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual students, there is a need for accurate recording of self-declaration in Apprenticeships.

Recommendation 1: Improve Individualised Learner Record self-declaration methods so that all disabilities and learning difficulties can be recorded.

Apprenticeship starts

The total number of Apprentices has risen substantially between 2005/6 and 2010/11 from 175,000 to 442,700. The number Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) has also risen during the same period from 19,200 to 35,600.

However the proportion declaring an LDD has fallen from 11.1% to 8%. As a trend this is extremely concerning and participation of Apprentices declaring LDD will need to be carefully monitored over the coming years.

Table 1 shows the numbers and proportion of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability

Start	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11*
LDD - Yes	19,200	20,400	25,900	23,700	26,400	35,600
LDD - No	153,600	162,400	196,900	214,600	250,600	403,700
LDD - Unknown	2,100	1,700	2,000	1,700	2,700	3,400
Proportion of LDD	11.1%	11.1%	11.5%	9.9%	9.4%	8.0%
Grand Total	175,000	184,400	224,800	239,900	279,700	442,700

*Data is final provisional for 2010/11.

The 16-18 cohort

If we focus on the 16-18 cohort (Table 2 below) we can see that while the numbers of Apprentices declaring an LDD has risen the proportion participating has fallen. 11.9% declared an LDD in 2005/6. This fell to 10.7% in 2009/10 and then 10% in 2010/11.

The fall in proportion is worrying particularly as the 16-18 cohort has been a priority for the National Apprenticeship Service since its creation in April 2009.

The 19-24 cohort

If the figures for the 16-18 cohort are disappointing the fall in the proportion of Apprentices declaring LDD in the 19-24 cohort is extremely concerning.

While there the proportion declaring an LDD rose to 10.9% in 2007/8 it dropped sharply to 8.4% in 2009/10 and then 7.9% in 2010/11.

The fall is greater than the 16-18 cohort and is particularly concerning as learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are more likely to be 'Apprenticeship ready' by the time they are 19-24.

The 25+ cohort

It is important to remember for the 25+ cohort that recruitment of this group has only really taken place over the last three years. It is therefore difficult to analyse trends. However we can see that in 2007/8 there was a significant number of Apprentices declaring an LDD (14.4%), which may represent a proportion of people waiting to take advantage of an Apprenticeship opportunity. This dropped to 8% in 2009/10 and then 6.7% in 2010/11.

The fact that the proportion rose to over 14% suggests that there is a sizeable group of disabled adults for whom an Apprenticeship is an attractive option. It is a fact that disabled people continue to be significantly under represented in the workforce and the potential benefit of adult apprenticeships for disabled people should be recognised.

The priorities of the National Apprenticeship Service with regard to those over 24 is focused on increasing the number of those participating in Apprenticeships at Level 3 and not exploring what could be a very real demand for Apprenticeships at level 2 by some disabled people.

Recommendation 2: The National Apprenticeship Service should monitor carefully the numbers of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability and respond to trends accordingly.

Table 2 Shows number and proportions of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability by age.

Cohort	Declaration of LDD	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11*
16-18	LDD – Yes	12,700	13,300	13,300	11,400	13,700	12,800
	LDD – No	92,800	99,700	102,900	94,900	112,900	114,400
	LDD – Unknown	1,500	1,100	1,100	800	1,200	1,100
Proportion of LDD		11.9%	11.7%	11.3%	10.6%	10.7%	10%
16-18 Total		107,000	114,100	117,400	107,100	127,800	128,300
19-24	LDD – Yes	6,500	7,100	8,900	6,700	8,800	11,000
	LDD – No	60,500	62,400	72,100	71,600	94,900	127,000
	LDD – Unknown	600	600	600	500	800	900
Proportion of LDD		9.6%	10.1%	10.9%	8.5%	8.4%	7.9%
19-24 Total		67,600	70,100	81,600	78,700	104,600	138,900
25+	LDD – Yes	-	-	3,700	5,600	3,800	11,800
	LDD – No	300	200	21,800	48,200	42,900	162,300
	LDD – Unknown	-	-	200	400	600	1,400
Proportion of LDD		-	-	14.4%	10.3%	8.0%	6.7%
25+ Total		300	300	25,700	54,200	47,300	175,500
Grand Total		175,000	184,400	224,800	239,900	279,700	442,700

*Data is final provisional for 2010/11.

Apprenticeship starts by learning difficulty

If we are to focus on Apprenticeship starts by learning difficulty (Table 3 below) we find concerning trends particularly with regard to the broad group of those with moderate learning difficulties. We have chosen to look specifically at this group together with those with dyslexia as they make up a substantial number within this cohort, and individuals in both groups, with appropriate support, can succeed. These two groups have different characteristics, the latter being more specific.

The 16-18 cohort

It should be noted that there has been some success in the area of dyslexia for this cohort. The number has risen from 2800 to 4400 and the proportion increased from 2.6% to 3.4%. However for those declaring a moderate learning difficulty the numbers have slumped from 4700 to 2600 and the proportion from 4.7% to 2%.

The 19-24 cohort

Again in terms of Dyslexia there is some success in this area. The number of starts has risen from 1800 to 4600 while the proportion has risen from 2.4% to 3.3%. However the numbers of those declaring a moderate learning difficulty has dropped from 2100 to 1300 while the proportion has fallen from 2.8% to 0.9%.

The 25+ cohort

As with overall figures we must remember that recruitment of this group has only begun recently and therefore the figures must be used with caution. However we can see that the proportion of those with dyslexia has been relatively steady at 1.8%. The proportion of Apprentices declaring a moderate learning difficulty has however dropped from 1.8% in 2007/08 to 0.7% in 2010/11.

What can we learn from this?

Whilst the rise both in numbers and proportion of those Apprentices declaring dyslexia should be welcomed, we should be cautious. Some of the increase may actually be down to more effective diagnosis as opposed to an actual increase in numbers. What is of great concern is the large reduction in both the proportion and actual numbers of those declaring a moderate learning difficulty.

This is a group for whom Apprenticeships should be a real option for some and their drop in numbers is extremely concerning.

Table 3 shows Apprenticeship starts by learning difficulty

Age	Learning Difficulty	2005/06	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09	%	2009/10	%	2010/11*	%
16-18	Autism Spectrum Disorder	0		0		0		0		0		100	0.1%
	Dyscalculia	100	0.1%	0		100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%
	Dyslexia	2,600	2.6%	3,000	2.8%	3,200	3.0%	3,200	3.2%	3,900	3.3%	4,400	3.4%
	Moderate learning difficulty	4,700	4.7%	4,500	4.3%	4,100	3.8%	3,300	3.3%	3,300	2.8%	2,600	2.0%
	Multiple learning difficulties	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	300	0.3%	200	0.2%
	No learning difficulty	89,800	90.3%	96,100	91.0%	98,200	91.3%	91,000	91.5%	106,800	91.4%	118,600	92.4%
	Not known/info not provided	1,500	1.5%	1,200	1.1%	1,200	1.1%	1,000	1.0%	1,500	1.3%	1,500	1.2%
	Other	400	0.4%	500	0.5%	500	0.5%	500	0.5%	600	0.5%	700	0.5%
	Other specific learning difficulty	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	200	0.2%
	Severe learning difficulty	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%
16-18 Total		99,500		105,600		107,600		99,400		116,800		128,300	
19-24	Autism Spectrum Disorder	0		0		0		0		0		100	0.1%
	Dyscalculia	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%
	Dyslexia	1,800	2.4%	2,100	2.7%	2,700	3.0%	2,600	3.1%	3,900	3.4%	4,600	3.3%
	Moderate learning difficulty	2,100	2.8%	1,800	2.3%	1,800	2.0%	1,200	1.4%	1,500	1.3%	1,300	0.9%
	Multiple learning difficulties	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	200	0.2%	100	0.1%	200	0.2%	100	0.1%
	No learning difficulty	69,900	93.0%	73,400	93.4%	84,100	93.3%	79,700	94.1%	106,300	93.4%	130,700	94.1%
	Not known/info not provided	800	1.1%	700	0.9%	800	0.9%	700	0.8%	1,200	1.1%	1,300	0.9%
	Other	300	0.4%	300	0.4%	300	0.3%	300	0.4%	400	0.4%	500	0.4%
	Other specific learning difficulty	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%
	Severe learning difficulty	0		0		0		0		0		0	
19-24 Total		75,200		78,600		90,100		84,700		113,800		138,900	
25+	Autism Spectrum Disorder	0		0		0		0		0		0	
	Dyscalculia	0		0		0		0		0		100	0.1%
	Dyslexia	0		0		500	1.8%	900	1.6%	900	1.8%	3,100	1.8%
	Moderate learning difficulty	0		0		500	1.8%	700	1.3%	500	1.0%	1,200	0.7%

	Multiple learning difficulties	0	0	100	0.4%	100	0.2%	0	100	0.1%	
	No learning difficulty	300	200	25,600	94.1%	53,300	95.3%	46,700	95.1%	168,600	96.1%
	Not known/info not provided	0	0	300	1.1%	600	1.1%	800	1.6%	1,800	1.0%
	Other	0	0	200	0.7%	300	0.5%	100	0.2%	400	0.2%
	Other specific learning difficulty	0	0	0		0		0		100	0.1%
	Severe learning difficulty	0	0	0		0		0		100	0.1%
25+	Total	300	300	27,200		55,900		49,100		175,500	
	Grand Total	175,000	184,400	224,800		239,900		279,700		442,700	

*Data is final provisional for 2010/11.

Table 4 shows Apprenticeship starts by disability.

	Disability	2005/06	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09	%	2009/10	%	2010/11*	%	
16-18	Asperger's Syndrome	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	disability affecting mobility	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	emotional/behavioural difficulties	200	0.2%	300	0.3%	300	0.3%	200	0.2%	300	0.3%	400	0.3%	
	hearing impairment	200	0.2%	300	0.3%	300	0.3%	200	0.2%	300	0.3%	300	0.2%	
	mental ill health	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	0	0.0%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	multiple disabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	no disability	200	0.2%	200	0.2%	200	0.2%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	Not defined	92,900	93.4%	98,900	93.7%	100,900	93.8%	93,500	94.1%	109,600	93.8%	120,600	94.0%	
	not known/info not provided	1,600	1.6%	1,300	1.2%	1,300	1.2%	1,100	1.1%	1,500	1.3%	1,600	1.2%	
	Other	800	0.8%	800	0.8%	800	0.7%	800	0.8%	1,100	0.9%	1,100	0.9%	
	other medical condition. eg epilepsy, asthma, diabetes	2,800	2.8%	3,000	2.8%	2,900	2.7%	2,500	2.5%	3,000	2.6%	3,100	2.4%	
	other physical disability	100	0.1%	200	0.2%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	200	0.2%	200	0.2%	
	profound complex disabilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	visual impairment	500	0.5%	600	0.6%	600	0.6%	500	0.5%	500	0.43%	500	0.4%	
16-18 Total		99,500		105,600		107,600		99,400		116,800		128,300		
19-24	Asperger's Syndrome	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	disability affecting mobility	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	emotional/behavioural difficulties	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	200	0.2%	
	hearing impairment	200	0.3%	200	0.3%	200	0.2%	200	0.2%	300	0.3%	300	0.2%	
	mental ill health	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	200	0.1%	
	multiple disabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	no disability	200	0.3%	400	0.5%	600	0.7%	200	0.2%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	
	Not defined	70,700	94.0%	73,600	93.6%	84,000	93.2%	80,400	94.9%	108,100	95.0%	132,100	95.1%	
	not known/info not provided	800	1.1%	700	0.9%	1,000	1.1%	900	1.1%	1,300	1.1%	1,400	1.0%	

19-24 Total	Other	500	0.7%	500	0.6%	500	0.6%	500	0.6%	900	0.8%	1,000	0.7%
	other medical condition. eg epilepsy, asthma, diabetes	2,000	2.7%	2,200	2.8%	2,300	2.6%	1,600	1.9%	2,100	1.8%	2,600	1.9%
	other physical disability	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	100	0.1%	200	0.1%
	profound complex disabilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	visual impairment	400	0.5%	700	0.9%	900	1.0%	600	0.7%	500	0.4%	500	0.4%
		75,200		78,600		90,100		84,700		113,800		138,900	
25+	Asperger's Syndrome	-	-	-	-	0		0		0		0	
	disability affecting mobility	-	-	-	-	100	0.4%	100	0.2%	200	0.4%	600	0.3%
	emotional/behavioural difficulties	-	-	-	-	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	100	0.1%
	hearing impairment	-	-	-	-	100	0.4%	200	0.4%	200	0.4%	700	0.4%
	mental ill health	-	-	-	-	100	0.4%	100	0.2%	100	0.2%	200	0.1%
	multiple disabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	no disability	-	-	-	-	500	1.8%	600	1.1%	100	0.2%	300	0.2%
	Not defined	300	100%	200	66.7%	24,000	88.2%	51,000	91.2%	45,700	93.1%	166,100	94.6%
	not known/info not provided	-	-	-	-	300	1.1%	700	1.3%	800	1.6%	1,700	1.0%
	Other	-	-	-	-	200	0.7%	400	0.7%	400	0.8%	1,200	0.7%
	other medical condition. eg epilepsy, asthma, diabetes	-	-	-	-	900	3.3%	1,200	2.1%	1,000	2.0%	3,100	1.8%
	other physical disability	-	-	-	-	100	0.4%	100	0.2%	100	0.2%	400	0.2%
	profound complex disabilities	-	-	-	-	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	visual impairment	-	-	-	-	700	2.6%	1,400	2.5%	500	1.0%	900	0.5%
25+ Total	300		300		27,200		55,900		49,100		175,500		
Grand Total	175,000		184,400		224,800		239,900		279,700		442,700		

* Data is final provisional data for 2010/11

Apprenticeship starts by disability

If we are to focus on Apprenticeship starts by disability (Table 4 above) we see that while some categories remain constant, others have experienced significant decreases.

The 16-18 cohort

Nearly all categories here remain constant with minimal rises and falls in both numbers and proportions. One change can be seen in the numbers declaring an 'other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes) These rose from 2800 in 2005/6 to 31000 in 2010/11. However as a proportion numbers fell from 2.8% to 2.4%.

The 19-24 cohort

Most categories have similarly remained constant, however Apprentices declaring a visual impairment rose to 900 in 2007/8 before slumping to 500 in 2010/11. Furthermore while the numbers declaring an 'other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)' have risen by 600 they have fallen as a proportion from 2.7% to 1.9%.

The 25+ cohort

As noted in the previous section we must remember that recruitment of this group has only begun recently and therefore the figures must be used with caution.

However we can note that some groups rose considerably when the 25+ Apprenticeships came online before dropping sharply. Thus there were 1400 Apprentices declaring a visual impairment in 2008/9. This has now dropped significantly to 900 in 2010/11. For those declaring an 'other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes) the total number has risen from 900 to 3100, however as a proportion this group has shrunk from 3.3% to 1.8%.

There may be some good news for those with hearing impairments, the number of which has risen to 700 in 2010/11 although as a proportion the number has remained relatively constant.

What can we learn from this?

It is clear that the number of starts have dropped significantly for certain groups across all age groups. Apprentices declaring a visual impairment, or who declare in the 'other medical condition' categories have all seen their numbers reduce whether in real terms or as a proportion or both.

Recommendation 3: Particular focus should be applied to address the decline in Apprenticeship starts for those with moderate learning difficulties, visual impairments, and medical conditions (such as epilepsy, asthma, diabetes).

Apprenticeship starts by region

Statistics are taken from Apprenticeship starts across the nine England regions. The data includes figures up to and including the Statistical First Release of 23 June 2011.

All regions but the West Midlands have experienced a fall in the participation of Apprentices declaring LDD. In some regions this fall is significantly starker than others. In addition data is taken from the National Employer Service. The regional data encompasses Apprentices in all age categories.

Table 5 Apprenticeship starts by region

Region	Proportions declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
West Midlands	10.6%	11%	11%	11.1%	11.7%	10.6%
South West	12%	12%	11.9%	11.7%	10.6%	9.6%
East Midlands	15.1%	14.8%	18%	12.1%	11%	9.3%
East of England	13.1%	13.2%	14.6%	14.6%	9.1%	8.8%
York and Humber	10.9%	11.4%	13.1%	11.6%	12.9%	8.1%
South East	14%	14.5%	15.6%	11%	8.8%	8%
London	10.5%	10.8%	11.3%	10.8%	8.6%	7.6%
North West	10.6%	10%	10.3%	9.8%	8.4%	7.3%
North East	11.5%	10.9%	8.3%	7.1%	9.8%	7.1%
Nat Employer Service	7.2%	7%	7%	5.8%	6.5%	6.1%

The above table shows that the following regions currently have the highest proportion of Apprentices declaring an LDD: West Midlands (10.6%), South West (9.6%) and East Midlands (9.3%).

The following regions have the lowest proportions: North East (7.1%), North West (7.3%) and London (7.6%).

When we look at numbers of Apprentices declaring LDD we can see that the top three are: North West (5,000), West Midlands (4,900) and South East (3,000).

The three regions with the lowest numbers of Apprentices declaring LDD are: East Midlands (1,800), North East (1,900) and East of England (2,000).

Decline by region

While the proportion of Apprentices declaring LDD has fallen across all but one region it has fallen most starkly in: South East (by 6%), East Midlands (by 5.8%) and North East (by 4.4%).

There has no or less of a decline in the following regions: West Midlands (no decline)², South West (by 2.4%) and Yorkshire and Humberside (by 2.8%).

It would be interesting to look at the experience of the West Midlands which has not only the second highest number of Apprentices declaring LDD but in addition the participation rate has remained relatively constant. We can also use the above data to highlight areas which would benefit from good practice being shared.

Recommendation 4: In devising a strategy for promoting good practice it may be prudent to look at the experiences within the West Midlands and target good practice promotion to other less successful areas.

Apprenticeship starts by framework

Data on framework starts for those declaring LDD can be problematic in that some of the figures are quite small. In addition they are rounded up or down to the nearest 100. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint the exact participation under the different frameworks and where there have been significant declines. However by looking at the frameworks with large numbers of participants we can draw some conclusions.

Table 6: Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability by framework

NB Only frameworks with more than 900 Apprentices declaring LDD have been selected in the table below with the exception of Plumbing. Plumbing has been included because it has been typically seen as an extremely competitive framework to gain entry to.

Framework	% of LDD 2010/11³	Number 2010/11	Rise/decline in proportion since 2005/06
Active leisure and learning	9.1%	1,200	+2.1% *
Business Administration	7.1%	2,000	-1.5%
Child Care, learning + development	11.6%	2,300	-7.1%
Construction	8.3%	1,100	-0.7
Customer Service	7.4%	2,600	-3.4%
Engineering	6%	900	-0.1%
Hairdressing	14.2%	1,900	-1.9%
Health & Social Care	8%	2,700	-5.4%
Hospitality & Catering	7.8%	1,600	-4.6%
IT & Telecoms	10%	1,000	+5.6%**
Management	6.5%	1,200	-4% ***
Plumbing	8.3%	400	+1.5%
Retail	7.8%	2,500	-8.6%
Vehicle maintenance/repair	12.2%	900	-1.2%

² Participation in the West Midlands did rise to 11.7% in 2009/10 before dropping to 10.6% the same figure reported in 2005/6.

³ The data includes figures up to and including the Statistical First Release of 23 June 2011.

** Active leisure and learning rose to 11.6% in 2007/8 before dropping to 9.1% in 2010/11*

*** This is a new framework in its third year.*

**** Participation did rise in Management to 18% in 2007/08 but fell sharply to 6.5%*

As we can see the majority of frameworks have seen a decline in the proportion of Apprentices declaring LDD. This is of particular concern in those areas that have traditionally had high representation. If we take Retail for example the total number of Apprentices has risen from 6,100 to 29,500. However the number of Apprentices declaring LDD has risen only from 1,200 to 2,500.

Frameworks with limited participation of Apprentices declaring LDD

Accountancy 3.6%
Electrotechnical 4.8%
Providing security services 5.6%
Public Services 0%
Sales and telesales 6.7%
Sporting excellence 5.6%
Teaching Assistants 3.8%

Frameworks with a high or increasing participation of Apprentices declaring LDD

Agriculture, crops and livestock 17%
Animal Care 17%
Beauty Therapy 21.4%
Hairdressing 14.2%
Plumbing 8.3% (whilst not particularly high, the proportion declaring LDD has consistently risen from 6.8%)
Vehicle fitting 16.7%

What can we learn from this?

It is worth pointing out that those frameworks with a high proportion of Apprentices declaring LDD are likely to be small in total numbers. For example there are only 600 Apprentices doing Animal Care. However it is likely that lessons can be learnt from frameworks such as Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy where numbers are relatively high along with participation. In addition there has been a consistent rise in the number of Apprentices declaring LDD on the Plumbing framework and again there may be something to learn here.

We must also look further at the frameworks where participation has slumped. For example Retail, Child Care, learning and development and Health and Social Care have also shown marked declines.

Success rates for Apprentices declaring LDD

The success rates of Apprentices completing their framework have risen considerably between 2005/6 (55.3%) and 2010/11 (73.8%).

The success rates for Apprentices declaring an LDD have also risen during the same period from 49.5% to 69.9%. This rise in success rates for Apprentices declaring LDD is extremely positive and has narrowed the attainment gap with their non-disabled peers. Promotion of this figure should certainly go some way to addressing the perception that disabled people are significantly less likely to succeed in their framework. We need to dispel this myth, as stated previously.

However, despite this improvement Apprentices declaring an LDD remain less likely to complete their framework and we must work to equalise success rates.

Table 7 shows the success rates of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability compared to those who did not.

Declared LDD	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
No	56%	62.1%	66.6%	71.7%	74.3%
Yes	49.5%	55.1%	61.4%	66.7%	69.9%
Unknown	54.4%	56.9%	62.7%	68.8%	69.9%
Total	55.3%	61.3%	66.1%	71.1%	73.8%

When looked at by age we can see that the older the Apprentice with an LDD the more likely they are to complete their framework. Thus a 16-18 year old has a success rate of 67.1%, a 19-24 year old: 71.1% and a 25+ Apprentice: 75%. This could be said for Apprentices in general but the trend is much starker for those declaring LDD.

Table 8 shows the success rates of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability by age

Age	Declared LDD	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
16-18	No	58.4%	62.7%	66.6%	70.7%	73.1%
	Yes	50.4%	55.0%	60.1%	63.6%	67.1%
	Unknown	55.7%	56.3%	61.4%	66.6%	68.9%
16-18 Total		57.4%	61.7%	65.8%	69.9%	72.4%
19-24	No	52.8%	61.2%	66.6%	71.8%	75.4%
	Yes	47.9%	55.2%	63.3%	69.1%	71.1%
	Unknown	52.5%	58.8%	64.5%	71.0%	69.4%
19-24 Total		52.4%	60.7%	66.3%	71.5%	74.9%
25+	No	41.2%	62.6%	77.4%	76.5%	75.1%
	Yes	*	61.9%	79.2%	73.1%	75.0%
	Unknown	*	9.1%	87.5%	75.6%	73.3%
25+ Total		40.9%	60.5%	77.7%	76.1%	75.1%
Total		55.3%	61.3%	66.1%	71.1%	73.8%

The data on completion rates matches with the thinking that some people with an LDD become more 'Apprenticeship ready' later in their educational career than those without an LDD.

Success rates by framework

The overall framework success rate for Apprentices declaring LDD has risen from 49.5% to 69.9%. This is a rise of 20.4%. However when broken down by framework we can see that some have risen above this.

Many frameworks have shown a marked increase in success rates for Apprentices declaring LDD. The following details the frameworks with a relatively large number of Apprentices declaring LDD.

Table 9 Shows success rates of frameworks with a relatively large number of Apprentices declaring LDD.

Framework	Success rate 2009/10	Increase for LDD from 2005/6
Active leisure and learning	75%	+37.7%
Business Administration	81%	+27.1%
Child Care, learning and development	68.9%	+20.9%
Construction	65.2%	+11.8%
Customer Service	78.5%	+24.3%
Engineering	73.7%	+17.7%
Hairdressing	60.3%	+0.2%
Health & Social Care	62.2%	+26%
Hospitality & Catering	63.1%	+24.2%
IT & Telecoms	88.4%*	
Management	71.5%	+16.8%
Retail	67.2%	+22.1
Vehicle maintenance and repair	67.1%	+14.9

* New framework

What can we learn from this?

It would be of value to look further at frameworks that have either a high success rate among Apprentices declaring LDD or have increased their success rate significantly. In particular it would be good to look at the Active leisure and learning framework, which is one of the few frameworks to not only increase the proportion of Apprentices declaring LDD but has also increased success rates significantly.

Success rates by disability and age

The success rates for completing Apprenticeship frameworks vary between the different disabilities. While the average for completion is 73.8% this is slightly less for Apprentices declaring LDD which is 69.9%. Among this cohort some Apprentices with particular disabilities fall significantly below this average while others are more likely to be successful.

The 16-18 cohort

In this cohort we can see that those young people with disability affecting mobility and visual impairments are more likely to succeed than those with mental ill health, emotional/behaviour difficulties and profound and complex disabilities.

The 19-25 cohort

In this cohort we can see that those with Asperger's, multiple disabilities and visual impairments are more likely to be successful than those with mental ill health, disability affecting mobility and emotional/behavioural difficulties.

The 25+ cohort

In this cohort we can see that those with a visual impairment, hearing impairment or disability affecting mobility are more likely to be successful than those with mental ill health, multiple disabilities and other physical disabilities.

What can we learn from this?

Across the age groups we can see success rates for those with mental ill health and emotional/behavioural difficulties are consistently lower than other groups. This may be because providers and employers are less skilled at supporting these groups and while many have experience of making reasonable adjustments for those with physical or sensory impairments this is perhaps less so for those with 'unseen' disabilities. Success rates among 16-18 for those with profound disabilities are also low. No data figures are available for the other two cohorts (19-24 and 25+) as presumably the numbers are below 50. We might assume however that success rates are also low here.

Success rates for those with sensory impairments (visual and hearing) remain high as do those with 'temporary disabilities' i.e. those recovering from accident or illness.

Table 10 shows success rates by disability and age

Age Band	Disability	2009/10
16-18	Asperger's Syndrome	68.00%
	disability affecting mobility	72.90%
	emotional/behavioural difficulties	63.60%
	hearing impairment	67.10%
	mental ill health	59.30%
	multiple disabilities	67.70%
	no disability	72.60%
	not known/information not provided	68.90%
	Other	67.70%
	other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	69.60%
	other physical disability	66.10%
	profound complex disabilities	62.50%
	visual impairment	77.50%
16-18 Total		72.40%
19-24	Asperger's Syndrome	78.90%
	disability affecting mobility	64.50%
	emotional/behavioural difficulties	66.20%
	hearing impairment	69.30%
	mental ill health	63.40%
	multiple disabilities	76.60%
	no disability	75.00%
	not known/information not provided	71.50%
	Other	72.80%
	other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	75.50%
	other physical disability	74.10%
	profound complex disabilities	*
	visual impairment	78.30%
19-24 Total		74.90%
25+	Asperger's Syndrome	*
25+	disability affecting mobility	83.00%
	emotional/behavioural difficulties	75.60%
	hearing impairment	77.40%
	mental ill health	71.80%
	multiple disabilities	73.70%
	no disability	74.90%
	not known/information not provided	75.60%
	Other	74.50%
	other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	74.30%
	other physical disability	70.00%
	profound complex disabilities	*
	visual impairment	80.20%
	25+ Total	

Success rates by learning difficulty

This section focuses on those success rates for those declaring a learning difficulty and specifically on those with dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties (see table 11 below). The reason is that both are sizeable groups and that as described earlier they really should be key target groups.

The 16-18 cohort

For this cohort success rates for those with dyslexia are close to Apprentices not declaring a learning difficulty, 70.2% and 73% respectively. However those declaring a moderate learning difficulty have a lower success rate at 61.6%.

The 19-25 cohort

For this cohort success rates for those with dyslexia are close to Apprentices not declaring a learning difficulty, 69.7% and 75.4% respectively although the gap is noticeable larger than for the 16-18 cohort. Those declaring a moderate learning difficulty have a success rate of 66.9%.

The 25+ cohort

Figures for this cohort tell a similar story. Apprentices with dyslexia have a success rate of 71.5% while those with a moderate learning difficulty have a success rate of 68.6%. The success rate for those not declaring a learning difficulty is 75.2%.

What can we learn from this?

From the outset it is important to note that the success rates for Apprentices with dyslexia is similar to those not declaring an LDD. Promotion of this fact is critical therefore to dispel the myth that those with dyslexia are less likely to achieve.

For those with a moderate learning difficulty the difference is much greater, the gap being over 12% for the 16-18 cohort and just under 10% for the 19-24 cohort. Those with moderate learning difficulties respond well to additional support, and providers should be encouraged to take full advantage of ALN/ASN funding to improve success rates with this important cohort.

Table 11 shows success rates for Apprentices with a learning difficulty

Age	Learning Difficulty	2009/10
16-18	Autism Spectrum Disorder	66.7%
	Dyscalculia	70.4%
	Dyslexia	70.2%
	Moderate learning difficulty	61.6%
	Multiple learning difficulties	60.8%
	No learning difficulty	73.0%
	Not known/info not provided	70.6%
	Other	64.7%
	Other specific learning difficulty	62.9%
	Severe learning difficulty	55.8%
16-18 Total		72.4%
19-24	Autism Spectrum Disorder	87.5%
	Dyscalculia	66.2%
	Dyslexia	69.7%
	Moderate learning difficulty	66.9%
	Multiple learning difficulties	58.5%
	No learning difficulty	75.4%
	Not known/info not provided	71.1%
	Other	69.5%
	Other specific learning difficulty	70.4%
	Severe learning difficulty	78.1%
19-24 Total		74.9%
25+	Autism Spectrum Disorder	*
	Dyscalculia	71.9%
	Dyslexia	71.5%
	Moderate learning difficulty	68.6%
	Multiple learning difficulties	67.2%
	No learning difficulty	75.2%
	Not known/info not provided	75.9%
	Other	75.2%
	Other specific learning difficulty	92.3%
	Severe learning difficulty	64.0%
25+ Total		75.1%
Grand Total		73.8%

Success rates by disability and region

Success rates by disability and region must be used with some caution as numbers can be relatively low in some areas and so care must be given to drawing out trends. If we are to look at particular groups which have low success rates mental ill health, emotional/behavioural, profound and complex disabilities and multiple disabilities we can draw some useful findings.

London has a high success rate for those with mental ill health (83.3%) which is significantly higher than other regions and the national average. For example Yorkshire and Humberside has just a 44% success rate for those with mental ill health.

Yorkshire and Humberside together with the South West have high success rates for those with emotional/behaviour difficulties (83.3% and 82.6% respectively) considerably higher than other regions such as East Midlands and East of England (55.6% and 56% respectively).

The North East has a high success rate for those with multiple disabilities (90.4%) significantly higher than other regions such as East of England and the South East (48.5% and 45.5% respectively).

Recommendation 5: Look at how good practice might be shared specifically around supporting Apprentices with mental ill health, emotional/behavioural difficulties, profound and complex disabilities and multiple disabilities.

'Programme led' Apprenticeship starts

A small proportion of Apprentices have been on 'Programme Led Apprenticeships (PLA)' up until the period of 2010/11. The proportion of Apprentices on PLAs was 3.9%. It should be noted here that PLAs are being phased out and 2010/11 was the last year of admittance. The Access Strand which in part is the successor to PLAs will be discussed in Chapter 6.

However, it is important to note that Apprentices declaring an LDD have consistently made up a sizeable proportion of those participating on PLAs. Thus 14.2% of Apprentices on PLAs declared an LDD in 2010/11, significantly higher than Apprenticeships proper which was 8.2%.

This is significant in that it demonstrates a demand for a pre apprenticeship offer for learners with LDD. It will be crucial therefore that access into Apprenticeship routes meet the needs of this group. This is explored further in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3: Review of Government strategy, guidance and relevant research

The following summarises Government strategy and guidance with regard to Apprenticeships as well as research that has a bearing on the discussion.

The New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme consultation and the Government response, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), August and December 2011 respectively.

The above consultation contains detailed proposals around implementing the strategy set out in the Department's 'Skills for sustainable growth' which was published in November 2010. Both consultation and response make clear that Apprenticeships are at the very heart of the Government's adult skills strategy. The documents set out a number of intentions including:

- requiring all Apprenticeship providers from the 2012/13 academic year to support Apprentices in progressing towards the achievement of Level 2 English and maths.
- requiring all Apprentices from October 2012 to take Functional Skills or GCSE qualifications as opposed to key skills.
- increasing the number of 16-24 year old apprentices through incentive payments to small employers (see November policy announcement below).
- extending Higher Apprenticeships provision, including the launch of opportunities for organisations to bid for funding.
- improving standards and quality, including withdrawing funding from providers that do not meet those standards.

The focus on level 2 in English and maths in this and other recent Government strategies and announcements is of particular concern and is likely to disadvantage people with learning difficulties, who can demonstrate their competence and commitment in other ways. This is explored further in Chapter 4.

Building Engagement, Building Futures: Our Strategy to Maximise the Participation of 16-24 Year Olds in Education, Training and Work (December, 2011)

This strategy, produced by the Department for Education (DfE), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and Department for Work (DWP) and Pensions to increase the participation of 16-24 year olds. It is estimated that there are over half a million 18-24 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET). From this 371,000 are looking after family or home, or are sick or disabled.

The strategy describes how increased access to Apprenticeships is vital to addressing those young people who are NEET, and reiterates the commitment to employer incentives and removal of 'unnecessary regulation.' It also describes how there will be an employer-led review into the standards and quality of Apprenticeships, reporting in Spring 2012.

The strategy also adds detail to the announcement on English and maths in the New Challenges, New Chances document where it states that:

We will make it a condition of funding that training providers should seek to support all learners who have not achieved A-C in English and maths to reach that standard, with performance data on results being published.*

Policy announcement on employer subsidies. BIS, November 2011.

As part of its growth strategy the Government announced on 16 November that it would offer employers with up to 50 employees a £1,500 incentive to take on Apprentices 16-24. This will comprise of an initial payment two months into the Apprenticeship, followed by a second payment when the Apprentice has completed and moved into sustainable employment. Providers will be required to offer training in English and maths up to level 2 for all apprenticeships.

Oversight of special education for young people aged 16-25, National Audit Office (November, 2011)

This report examined whether the DfE, agencies and local authorities are effective in securing value for money with regard to supporting 16–25 year olds with special educational needs in England.

While the report was clear that Apprenticeships were out of scope a number of points are relevant particularly to contextualize the issues. In particular it highlighted how 30% of 16 year olds with a statement of special educational needs were not in education, employment or training at 18.

An important point made by the NAO is the savings to the public purse of supporting disabled people into employment. This economic case undoubtedly can be applied to Apprenticeships. They described how:

“supporting one person with learning disabilities into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, reduce lifetime cost to the public purse by around £170,000 at today’s prices (£80,000 Net Present Value), and increase their income by between 55 and 95 per cent.”

Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Ofsted, August 2011

The report focused on the transition from school to post 16 provision of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) up to the age of 25. Ofsted carried out extensive interviews with providers as well as 21 Apprentices with LDD. Specifically on Apprenticeships it noted:

- How many chose not to declare an LDD when applying for an Apprenticeship. Indeed 13 of the Apprentices had had their disability identified after enrolment. The main reason discussed was fear that their application might be rejected.
- There were serious concerns over the end of the Entry to Employment programme and the phasing out of Programme Led Apprenticeships.

LLDD have been represented significantly on these programmes and there would need to be a replacement which provided an effective route into full Apprenticeships for this cohort.

- Foundation Learning (FL) needed to include the opportunity to gain work experience and skills relevant to Apprenticeships that learners are aspiring to. There were concerns that currently FL provision was driven by the accreditation.
- They encountered a number of supported Apprenticeship programmes where success rates were high. In addition the report contains a number of good practice examples on how Apprentices with an LDD have been supported to succeed.

Apprenticeships – Delivery Models, National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), July, 2011

This statement published by NAS sets out expectations around delivery of Apprenticeship frameworks for providers. The statement confirms that Programme Led Apprenticeships (PLAs) will be phased out. It sets out a number of actions that providers might take together with the support of NAS and Skills Funding Agency to transfer learners currently on PLAs into full Apprenticeships.

This policy change is of critical importance to Apprentices with LDD who are more likely to be participating in a PLA than non-disabled Apprentices. Further detail surrounding this policy is discussed in the Chapter 6.

Specification for Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE) BIS, DfE, Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), May 2011

Introduced by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, the SASE sets out the minimum requirements, which must be included in an apprenticeship framework. Frameworks must consist of a minimum of 37 credits taken from the qualifications and credit framework. This must include at least 10 credits achieved through a competence qualification relating to the occupation or job role. They must also include at least 10 through a knowledge based element. This includes the technical skills and knowledge/understanding of the theoretical concepts specifically relating to the occupation or job role. The SASE also sets out the minimum levels of English and Maths required within the frameworks.

SASE Information Requirement, BIS, DfE, SFA and NAS, May 2011

The Information Requirement is non-statutory guidance to accompany the SASE. It sets out the requirements for information on equality and diversity. It requires that:

Apprenticeship frameworks are inclusive and can demonstrate an active approach to identifying and removing barriers to entry and progression. Apprenticeship frameworks must ensure equality of access for those with a learning difficulty. Specifically, the framework must include a statement setting out:

- a) *whether and where there is under-representation within the occupation;*

- b) *the barriers to entry and progression within the occupation for individuals within these groups;*
- c) *what action has been taken to remove these barriers or to justify them objectively for the Apprenticeship framework.*

It also describes how any entry conditions must comply with the principles of equality and diversity. In addition the guidance is clear that where prior qualifications are set as an entry condition, people with LDD should be given the opportunity to show their potential to complete through a portfolio of evidence based on work experience, volunteering and non accredited courses.

The Information requirement is an excellent resource for framework developers but as a separate document to the SASE there are concerns that it is not always utilised.

Recommendation 6: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and NAS should work to actively promote the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards England (SASE) information requirement which highlights the importance of accessibility and flexibility, to employers, providers and others involved in creating Apprenticeship frameworks.

Evaluation of the Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching System, NAS (2010)

This report looks at the experiences of users of the Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching System (VMS), an online system for searching and applying for Apprenticeships. It found only 1% of applicants chose to declare a disability during the online application process. The low declaration could well be attributed to an unwillingness of applicants to disclose for fear of their application being rejected by the employer. In addition while disabled users had a relatively positive experience of using the system satisfaction rates were lower than non-disabled users.

The report provides useful recommendations about how the VMS could aid the successful application of disabled candidates and it is important that NAS fully implement them. The recommendations include:

- Allowing employers to display the Positive about disabled people 'two ticks' symbol next to their vacancy and included information about guaranteed interview schemes.
- Encouraging employers to include information on steps they take to meet the needs of disabled applicants and employees as well as the culture and ethos of the organisation.
- Employers should ask during the application process whether the candidate needs any adjustments made for a reason related to a disability.

Recommendation 7: Work should be undertaken by NAS to address the very low level of applicants declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability during the application process for the online vacancy matching service.

Review of Vocational Education - The Wolf Report and the Government's response (March 2011 and May 2011 respectively)

Carried out by Professor Alison Wolf, the review considers how vocational education for 14- to 19-year-olds in England can be improved in order to promote progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes. It made the following recommendations:

- Frameworks should include a requirement to achieve a qualification equivalent of the England and Maths GCSE A*-C or the GCSE itself. The Government responded to this saying that Functional Skills and GCSEs will replace Key Skills.
- Frameworks should not be drawn up solely by Sector Skills Councils (SSC) but through more employer involvement. The Government accepted that employers need to be more involved and that development needed to be more collaborative.
- Employers should be incentivised to take on Apprentices through direct payments. The Government responded that it will consider this as part of a wider 16-19 funding review.

Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability, DfE, (March 2011)

This Green Paper outlines a vision for a single assessment process leading to a combined education, health and care plan to run from birth to 25 years old. Chapter 4: "Preparing for adulthood" includes proposals to explore ways that these young people can have improved employment opportunities. Supported employment and Apprenticeships as well as more work with employers to champion the benefits of employing disabled people are advocated.

Consultation on the Green Paper closed in June 2011 and it will be important to connect up the outcome of this overarching SEN review with the proposed changes of this report to make apprenticeships more inclusive.

Skills for Sustainable Growth BIS, November 2010

The Skills for Sustainable Growth strategy set out the Government's programme of reform for the further education, Apprenticeship and skills sector. It included a number of objectives on Apprenticeships. Specifically to:

- continue to invest in as well as to expand the number of Apprenticeships. Specifically they would increase the number of Advanced and Higher Level Apprenticeships (up to 75,000 by 2014-15).
- reshape Apprenticeships so Level 3 (Advanced Apprenticeships) becomes the level to which learners and employers should aspire.
- ensure there are clear routes from Apprenticeships to higher level training including, but not exclusively, Level 4 Higher Apprenticeships.

With low numbers of Apprentices declaring LDD reaching Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeships it is unlikely that expansion will benefit them significantly. The only way to increase the proportion of Apprentices with LDD at this level is to ensure that they have opportunities to start and complete frameworks at level 2, whilst encouraging Level 3 as appropriate.

Doing things differently: step changes in skills & inclusion. People with disabilities. (National Skills Forum, 2010)

The NSF report included a section on Apprenticeships and a number of policy recommendations. These included:

- Apprenticeship frameworks should be equality impact assessed particularly with regard to the introduction of the functional skills elements.
- Sector Skills Councils should encourage employers to promote equality in their practices but also target unrepresented groups.
- BIS and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) should work with NAS to look at simplifying funding to support disabled people in learning and work.

Learning for Work: Employability and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. (Yola Jacobsen and Peter Little OBE, Learning and Skills Council, October 2009).

The report details the outcomes and recommendations from 9 regional conferences on a wide range of employability issues concerning LLDD. Recommendation 3 stated that “The National Apprenticeship Service should make funding available and give priority to improving participation and completion rates in Apprenticeships by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities”.

The report also includes a valuable section on “the employer message”, which contains material which is relevant to apprenticeships as well as the wider employment context.

Research to Shape Critical Mass Pilot to Address Under-Representation in Apprenticeships, Institute for Employment Studies, 2009

The report commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) looks at how the Critical Mass Pilots (now named Diversity in Apprenticeships) might be targeted in order to address under representation of certain equality groups within Apprenticeships. They noted in their report that: Framework starts of learners with learning difficulties are under-represented among electrotechnical apprenticeships, management, active leisure and learning, and retail.

Under-representation for learners with disabilities is notable in framework starts in the electrotechnical, plumbing, active leisure and learning, vehicle maintenance and repair, and hospitality and catering sectors.

A key recommendation in the report was that pilot activity should focus on improving the provision of workplace-based support and mentoring schemes, to improve take- up and completion rates among atypical groups. Lastly, pilot activities should focus on the much greater promotion of apprenticeships, particularly in schools, or through greater equality training for employers, staff, careers advisors and teachers.

Addressing Inequality in Apprenticeships: Learners' views, Learning and Skills Council, 2009

This piece of research was based on a small number of focus groups totalling 100 learners and includes feedback from disabled learners. Although very limited in scope, it does highlight some issues. For example: 'flexibility in the learning structure is particularly important to apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities' A reality check is that 'disabled potential apprentices pointed to the fact that developing the required skills had limited impact on their chances of getting a job and they questioned the ability of Apprenticeships to challenge this situation'

Chapter 4: Views of stakeholders

In drafting this report a wide range of views have been incorporated from stakeholders. These have included public and private training providers, employers, officials, disability organisations, disabled people themselves as well as sector bodies. A full list of those consulted is detailed in Appendix B. A list of common themes has been drawn out and detailed in this chapter.

Entry to Apprenticeships

Stakeholders described how flexibilities were needed in the application process and in particular how learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) demonstrated their abilities, skills and experiences in order to secure a placement.

This is particularly the case as applicants with LDD may not have taken the 'traditional' route into an Apprenticeship and may not necessarily have the GCSE qualifications that others will have. Some will for example have been progressing through Foundation Learning. This is explored further in Chapter 6.

A concern raised by stakeholders was that some employers and providers, often in response to a high number of applicants, set the bar high in terms of entry requirements. Others have introduced entry examinations or assessments. Both of these measures may indirectly prevent some young people with LDD from getting onto an Apprenticeship. One provider described how:

'Some employers are seeking to recruit Apprentices who can progress through the Apprenticeship levels, and therefore set entry criteria for GCSE results. This can be a barrier for many young people seeking to progress from Foundation Learning'

It is important that the apprenticeship application system is both flexible and inclusive so that anyone who wishes to participate is able to demonstrate their abilities and capabilities through an appropriate medium.

For young people with LDD and indeed all those who meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 this might be through a portfolio of evidence demonstrating skills in addition or instead of qualifications such as volunteering, work experience, non-accredited learning, references and so on.

One particularly interesting solution is one that JISC TechDis with funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has developed with partners within specialist colleges. They have created accessible digital portfolios, which allow learners to present their skills and abilities together with qualifications, references and other relevant materials.

Recommendation 8: The Apprenticeship Unit should liaise with the relevant bodies, such as JISC TechDis, to explore and promote alternative platforms, applications and solutions such as multi-media and accessible digital portfolios.

Self-declaration and data collection

Stakeholders expressed concern over the self-declaration process in Apprenticeships and consistency in data collection for Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Their concerns were focused on how the process and nature of Apprenticeships dissuaded individuals from declaring an LDD.

Providers pointed to the current Apprenticeships Application Form (2008 issue 10). The learner declaration in Section 10 relates to “health record”, and is an overt use of the medical model of disability, referring to “the risks to your health and safety”. It asks whether the applicant has or experiences any of 13 assorted “conditions” or impairments. In addition to this Apprentices may be dissuaded from declaring an LDD for fear that they might not be successful in the Application process. Apprenticeships are notoriously oversubscribed and some applicants may see declaration as a hindrance to their application.

It was an issue touched upon in the Ofsted report where they found that a high number of Apprentices had only been assessed as having an LDD after they had started their framework.

Recommendation 9: The self-declaration process must be reviewed and improved so that information regarding learning difficulties and/or disabilities is correctly disclosed and recorded.

Funding support for Apprentices with LDD

Currently Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) are entitled to support through Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or Additional Social Needs (ASN).

In addition they are entitled to Access to Work (AtW) as employees through the Department of Work and Pensions. Currently few employers draw down AtW while ALN and ASN are limited to the provider part of the framework. In addition providers have reported how it is difficult to put in place additional study support for individuals who spend a large proportion of their time out of the class room.

A further factor is the different methodology for funding additional support in work-based learning (WBL), principally, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Additional Social Needs (ASN). This methodology is now over 10 years old and was originally a temporary expedient. It is now perceived to be highly bureaucratic, compared to the lighter touch Additional Learning Support (ALS) methodology in mainstream FE provision. The Learning and Skills Network (LSN) completed a major report, *Investigation into Funding Additional Learning Support in the Employer Responsive Model* (Meyer et al, 2009) and its recommendations should be considered carefully, as the authors found that the current system did not encourage providers to work with those who had more severe or challenging needs. The issue becomes even more pertinent when discussing eligibility to the Access Strand, criteria for which includes receipt of ALN and/or ASN. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Recommendation 10: Urgent consideration should be given to reform the funding methodology for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Additional Social Needs (ASN) including existing arrangements for exceptional support, including review of Learning and Skills Network recommendations.

Providers have described how ideally the Apprentice should be assessed before their Apprenticeship starts and a flexible funding package of support agreed which follows the Apprentice where appropriate through all elements of the framework.

Setting the level of English and maths

Currently providers may deliver the English and maths requirements in Apprenticeship frameworks through Key Skills (literacy, numeracy (plus ICT in some frameworks) or Functional Skills (English, maths (plus ICT in some frameworks) or English and maths GCSE.

An important issue identified by providers and Apprentices were difficulties in completing the Key Skills/Functional Skills elements of the frameworks which are currently set at Level 1. Thus while Apprentices with LDD were able to complete the on the job elements of the framework some struggled to complete the Key/Functional Skills elements. This was particularly the case for English. One provider described the knock on effect to recruitment:

'We have many examples where recruitment into Apprenticeship and progression on to Level 3 has been refused due to lack of ability to achieve these (English and Maths) elements of the Framework. In fact our lead contract holder at the time insisted that we only recruit young people who achieved a Level 1 assessment. Functional Skills will only make this worse due to their increased difficulty.'

Currently in order to complete an Intermediate Apprenticeship framework the individual must achieve (or have achieved) at least one from the following options (a-k):

- a. a Functional Skills qualification in English to either Level 1 or Level 2;
- or
- c. a Key Skills qualification in Literacy to either Level 1 or Level 2 achieved either before September 2013 as part of the Apprenticeship or before September

The above is true for numeracy/maths.

As detailed in the previous chapter, the Government has announced that from the 2012/13 academic year providers must support Apprentices in progressing towards the achievement of level 2 English and maths.

While this is undoubtedly a positive aspiration, it creates a significant challenge in that many Apprentices with LDD have difficulties achieving at level 1 English and maths. Indeed many providers described how if it was possible to complete English and maths qualifications at Pre-entry level more learners with LDD would be able to participate.

While it may well be appropriate to support many Apprentices with LDD to achieve level 2 in English and maths this must not become part of the completion criteria for Intermediate Apprenticeship frameworks. If the bar is set at this level there is a very real risk that providers and employers will be disincentivised from taking on learners with LDD.

Recommendation 11: Completion criteria for English and maths in Intermediate Apprenticeship frameworks must not be set at level 2.

The transfer from Key Skills to Functional Skills and GCSEs

As described in Chapter 3 from October 2012 Apprentices will need to complete qualifications in Functional Skills or GCSEs as opposed to Key Skills.

Concerns over the transition persist among providers and particularly the view that Functional Skills are more challenging for Apprentices with LDD. This is because of both the level but also because of the issue of contextualisation as described later in this chapter.

Access to the assessment

There clearly are issues facing Apprentices with LDD with regard to accessing the Key Skills assessment process and particularly the literacy and numeracy elements. This was raised by a number of stakeholders and has in addition been raised in Parliament by Lord Addington.⁴

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) has reported receiving a significant number of enquiries from Apprentices and their families where access arrangements and reasonable adjustments have not been made.

Specifically the BDA described how Apprentices have been denied access to assistive software for the literacy assessment of Key Skills. In other cases it has become apparent that assessment centres are unaware of reasonable adjustments such as using coloured paper, something which can make a significant difference for some Apprentices with dyslexia.

Awarding organisations have a duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and are well versed in doing so with regard to General Qualifications and entry-level qualifications.

⁴ Question raised in House of Lords by Lord Addington. 6 October 2011
<http://services.parliament.uk/hansard/Lords/bydate/20111006/mainchamberdebates/part003.html>

Contextualising the assessment

Providers together with the BDA raised the issue that Apprentices with LDD are often disadvantaged with regard to the literacy and numeracy elements of the assessment as they are assessed out of context.

Thus an Apprentice working to the vocabulary and numeracy associated with a particular job may find it difficult to relate to language and numbers presented in a completely different context. This might be particularly an issue for those with disabilities that may limit 'imagination' such as Asperger's Syndrome as well as those with dyslexia. In addition deaf students with English as their second language (British Sign Language being their first) may struggle with alien vocabulary. Similarly an Apprentice with dyslexia described how a new context with new vocabulary made them 'panic' during the assessment.

A standard flexibility offered by awarding bodies is to offer additional time. This may assist some Apprentices, however not all.

The reaction by some providers has been to offer additional lessons for those struggling in order to 'teach to the test.' This is not a long-term solution and indeed may well have a detrimental impact for an Apprentice who has built up knowledge contextualised by the vocabulary or numbers of the job. Furthermore extra lessons may restrict the time the Apprentice has in the workplace. While some employers may be flexible and understanding, others (particularly small businesses) may feel the loss in hours acutely.

It is crucial therefore that awarding organisations have the ability to assess within the context of the Apprenticeship. To not do so, risks seeing little improvement in the success rate for Apprentices with LDD.

Recommendation 12: The Apprenticeships Unit should communicate to Awarding Organisations through Ofqual and others that reasonable adjustments must be made to both Key and Functional Skills in line with the Equality Act 2010 and that the assessment contextualised for those that require it.

One-to-one support

In addition as mentioned above a degree of flexibility is needed to allow learners who need it more time off for additional one-to-one support. This is likely to be additional coaching in Key/Functional Skills and again often with regard English and maths. However additional one-to-one support has also proved useful in the development of soft skills, such as interacting and communicating with others, teamwork and so on.

Providers that had been able to provide support of this nature and were working with flexible employers reported success. In support of this, LSC research into methods of boosting the proportion of framework completions by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities conducted in the North East region in 2009 showed that additional financial resources were often used by providers to offer additional support for key skills.

The benefits of one to one support in the context of Apprenticeships and Key/Functional Skills should be communicated to providers and should be seen very much as a reasonable adjustment and therefore funded through Additional Learning Needs.

In addition employers must be made aware that this extra support is available.

Recommendation 13: One-to-one support for those that require it must be in place to support Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in completing the Key / Functional Skills part of their framework.

Good practice case study: Liam and Russell Marlow Painting and decorating

My name is Liam Catterson and I'm 21 year old. I have Asperger's Syndrome and am currently doing an Apprenticeship in Painting and Decorating.

I decided to do an Apprenticeship because you can get an important qualification which means that you have more opportunities for the future.

I wanted to do painting and decorating not only because I really enjoy it, but also because I would like to be self employed. This Apprenticeship will give me the opportunity to do this one day.

I did a bit of painting and decorating for my family before I started the Apprenticeship. I applied for lots of jobs but didn't get anything. I then phoned up Russell Marlow Painting and Decorating. Russell invited me in for an interview and gave me a job.

I decided to do an Apprenticeship and this means going to Northbrook College in Worthing one day a week. It lasts for two years and I was a bit worried that this was a long time to commit to but it's been fine. I have found the theory part of the college work difficult especially in the first year, but now in the second year I understand it better.

Because of my Asperger's I have trouble taking down all the information I need to at college. I have someone called a 'scribe' who writes down for me what I need to know so that I can listen to the teacher. I also get some extra help with the practical work.

We have to do Key Skills as part of the Apprenticeship and I also get help with this. I have extra maths and English support at lunch times and they make sure I understand what I need to know. To pass your Apprenticeship you have to pass maths and English.

Russell, my employer, is really supportive. He always makes sure he tells me things clearly so that I understand what's expected of me. I really enjoy the work side of the Apprenticeship because every day is different and I like the change.

Since this has been written Liam has successfully passed his Apprenticeship.

Minimum Levels of Performance

Currently Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) are applied to providers around the proportion of framework completions. Failure to reach this level will result in contracts not being renewed. Currently the MLP is set at 50% i.e. half of all Apprentices must complete otherwise the providers risks losing their contracts.

Stakeholders spoke about how MLPs create risk averse behaviour from providers i.e. that some might be unwilling to take on disabled Apprentices for fear of them harming their success rates. While it is true that Apprentices declaring LDD are marginally less likely to complete their framework than their non-disabled peers (69.9% in comparison to 73.8% respectively) it is likely that providers and employers perceive the success rates as being much lower. This is certainly the view taken by a significant number of stakeholders. It is therefore important to counter the myth that Apprentices with LDD significantly underperform, but there remains an immediate requirement to allay providers' fears on this.

Recommendation 14: Consideration should be given to moving completion rates for Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities outside of Minimum Level of Performance targets. This would remove the disincentive currently facing providers.

Creating new opportunities

An Apprenticeship is employment and as such creation of new Apprenticeships is similar to the debate on job creation. While this is obviously outside the scope of this report it is important to reflect the views of young people who were consulted in this research. Many spoke of their concerns about there being few opportunities available. Some of the young people's comments are quoted below.

“Opportunities today are hard to find. Jobs are disappearing daily. Just take a look at the economy – the Government is taking away jobs – it's not very good. EMA being taken away and replacing it with a lower payment is not fair” James (19)

“I am in care and I am struggling to get work. There does not seem to be any opportunities out there. I am willing to work, I just need a job” Matthew (17)

“Nurseries are laying off their own staff so why would they take me on an Apprenticeship when they now have to pay as there isn't any programme led places” Shannon (17)

On the job support

A number of stakeholders talked about the importance of on the job support both in terms of job coaching but also mentoring. Mentoring has been shown to be particularly effective for Apprentices with LDD, some of whom may have limited experience of the workplace, while others may have difficulties integrating themselves into a team. Mentors are also important in that they

can monitor progress and spot signs of distress or simply where the Apprentice might be struggling.

Stakeholders also spoke about importance of job coaching. The level of job coaching varies depending on the individual and in some cases would be relatively intense at the beginning of the framework, tapering away as the Apprentice settles into the role.

The Department for Work and Pension's Access to Work (AtW) scheme will meet all costs for support workers for employees including Apprentices. However it is thought that few employers are aware of this.

In addition some providers described how it would be more supportive for the Apprentice in some cases if AtW funding together with ALN/ASN could be combined so that a support worker could be funded to meet the needs of the Apprentice both at college and on the job.

Recommendation 15: Ensure that funding is flexible to fund job coaches for those Apprentices that need it.

Working with employers

Providers described how more work needs to be done with employers in terms of their knowledge with regards disability and learning difficulties in general, but also the support that is available to them. This is particularly pertinent because in the current economic climate some employers may perceive taking on disabled people as Apprentices as more costly. One provider described how:

'Government and other National agents such as SFA, YPLA, DFE, SSC's need to ensure that employers understand the business case and corporate responsibility for employing LLDD and meet the demand; rather than levying this responsibility passively on providers; and reward and incentivise those providers and employers who already excel in this area'

Many of those interviewed found that employers often had a limited awareness of reasonable adjustments and their duties under the Equality Act 2010 as well as sources of support such as Access to Work, which is available to Apprentices with an employed status.

One option mentioned by interviewees was to present directly to employers success stories where Apprentices with LDD had thrived bringing benefits to the business.

Recommendation 16: NAS should encourage employers to seek to recruit Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by promoting the "redefined offer". As part of this NAS should highlight the support available as well as the importance of mentors.

Good practice Case study. Dan and Russell Marlow Painting and Decorating

Daniel Turner is doing an Apprenticeship in Painting and Decorating. He is 22 years old and has a hearing impairment.

I decided to do an Apprenticeship because you have the opportunity to learn at college but you can also learn through real work.

Before starting the Apprenticeship I was working three days a week in the local supermarket and studying two days at College doing an NVQ Level 1. I was getting bored working at the supermarket as it was the same every day and so got in touch with Russell Marlow Painting and Decorating. Russell invited me in for an interview and gave me the job. I discussed with Russell and my family that it would be great to do an Apprenticeship because it is a good opportunity to get a qualification while working at the same time.

I went to College twice a week and worked the other three days. I got support with the theory side of the work. I had a 'scribe' who helped me to write things down as sometimes I would miss what was said. I found the Key Skills part of the work hard but I got help with this as well.

I have now completed my Apprenticeship and am now working towards an NVQ Level 3. I'm also still working for Russell Marlow Painting and Decorating and am really enjoying it. I work with a small team of about 7 people. The other people I work with know about my hearing impairment and they are supportive of me. They talk to me face to face so that I can lip read. I think that the team just learn how to manage.

In the future I would like to develop skills in carpentry and then set up my own business. I would like to start off working alone and then maybe start to take on other people. I think it might be difficult to set up on my own because I would find talking on the phone to people difficult but I could always work with a business partner.

I think that Apprenticeships are a really good idea because unlike other jobs you get a qualification out of it. I don't think that there is enough information out there about Apprenticeships. I was given a book in college which had information about Apprenticeship options, but there was no information about getting support if you are disabled and want to do an Apprenticeship.

The third sector

A number of stakeholders discussed the important role that the third sector could play in developing innovative new models of Apprenticeships both for their own staff but also in terms of supporting Apprentices working in partner organisations or with other employers.

In some cases third sector organisations have secured special dispensation from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to deliver Apprenticeships outside of the traditional funding methodology with positive effects. In particular, the successful example of

Hertfordshire Pass, an organisation led by disabled people (see below) is instructive and worth exploring elsewhere.

In another case a proactive group of training providers (Greater Merseyside Learning Providers Federation) have come together to look specifically at how they may support more learners with LDD into Apprenticeships and have secured a small grant from NAS to do this. This is a good example of how modest grants from NAS can provide an impetus and encouragement, and is to be commended. It would be useful if NAS would publicise the potential flexibilities and consult further with relevant organisations.

Recommendation 17: Explore with organisations led by disabled people and other third sector organisations how innovative new models of Apprenticeships might be developed and funded.

Hertfordshire PASS

PASS is a user-driven charity using employment and self directed support to enable disabled people to live more independently.

PASS first appointed 3 young disabled people as apprentices in April 2008 who were responsible for developing WorkABILITY. The WorkABILITY programme is considered to be the only employment preparation programme led by young disabled for their peers in the UK. It is focused on supporting young disabled people aged from 16 to 25 to “overcome barriers to work.”

In addition PASS runs EmployerABILITY which is about people becoming an effective employer of their own carers. Through this PASS offers an Apprenticeship framework in ‘Being an employer of care staff.’

The number of disabled Apprentices at PASS has now risen to 12, 6 of whom have taken on the management of both WorkABILITY, and EmployerABILITY. The other 6, have been placed with local employers, including a multinational company with offices in Hatfield, a football project for young disabled people based in St Albans, the local authority, and a charity providing advocacy services.

These 6 apprentices placed with local employers are given full time adult mentoring support until the apprentice and the partner employer are ready for the apprentice to ‘go it alone’. The mentors are recruited by the existing WorkABILITY apprentices and matched to the newly appointed apprentices.

In 2010 PASS was ‘highly commended’ as a micro-employer in the Regional Finals of the Apprentice of the Year Awards.

Promoting Apprenticeships to disabled people

Stakeholders described how it was important to break down stereotypes and assumptions that exist around disabled people accessing Apprenticeships.

Disabled people continue to be dissuaded from undertaking an Apprenticeship or steered toward a particularly framework. Careers information, advice and education (CIAG) must show that support is available and that disabled people are entitled to reasonable adjustments and flexibilities both within work and education.

Significant concern was expressed by respondents concerning the changes to CIAG services, including reductions in specialist LLDD advisers in many areas.

Recommendation 18: The NAS and partners should promote case studies of individual Apprentices and the support they have received.

Case study

Katie commenced with YMCA Training Salford when she was in Year 10 at All Hallows School in Salford. Katie has a Statement of Educational Needs.

Katie participated in a GM Power pre-16 programme, which involved 1 day per week at Belvedere Children's Centre in Salford. The staff were so impressed with her lovely nature and with her interaction with the children that they gave her a glowing report, which boosted Katie's confidence.

Following the completion of the 2 year GM Power course in which she achieved a Level 1 qualification in Early Year's Caring Practice. Katie was interviewed for a place on Entry to Employment. However it was felt by all that she was not ready for e2e and instead would benefit from the STRIVE project.

STRIVE is a 16 week ESF funded LLDD Project aimed at 16-18 year olds who are NEET (not in employment education or training) or at risk of NEET. All learners have a moderate learning or physical disability. As part of this Katie undertook a work placement 2 days a week at KidzRus a private nursery. Although she was really shy at first, she eventually 'came out of her shell' and started to integrate within the setting.

Katie has now been offered an Apprenticeship with KidzRus and is progressing well. She has been provided with 1:1 support by YMCA Training for her written work. In addition she has been assigned a Mentor, Sandra who has ensured that Katie felt included and developed the skills in order to undertake tasks with support.

She has worked extremely hard and it is hoped that due to the support from all parties that Katie will actually complete her Child Care Apprenticeship programme earlier than her expected end date.

Chapter 5: Prioritising funding for Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

In order to tackle the decline in participation of Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) action is needed. It must be recognised that ultimately employers must be encouraged to consider the positive merits of recruiting disabled apprentices. However incentivising the system will give providers confidence to take on disabled people, support them appropriately and promote them to employers. It will even give the flexibility for some providers with appropriate skills to specialise in this area.

The Education Act 2011 and Parliamentary commitment to 19-24 cohort

During the passage of the Education Bill, Parliamentarians were explicit in their commitment to Apprentices with LDD. The Minister in December 2010 was clear that regulations would cover 'young people aged 19-24 who have a disability or learning difficulty'.⁵

This was reiterated during the scrutiny of the Bill during the committee stage in the House of Lords in September 2011.⁶

When the Act received royal assent in December 2011 it made important changes with regard to Apprenticeships. Section 69 and 70 are particularly important with regard to this agenda.

Section 69 amends the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCLA) 2009 and outlines the 'Apprenticeship Offer.' As part of the offer a new duty is placed on the Chief Executive of Skills Funding to:

secure the provision of proper facilities for apprenticeship training that is suitable to the requirements of persons who—
(a) are within subsection (4), (5) or (6), and
(b) have an apprenticeship opportunity

The explanatory notes are clear that the new duty is to:

*fund apprenticeship training by securing the provision of proper facilities for every young person in certain specified groups who has secured an apprenticeship opportunity.*⁷

The explanatory notes go on to define these specified groups as:

- all young people aged 16 to 18;
- people aged 19 to 24 who are care leavers
- people aged 19 to 24 with a disability or learning difficulty

⁵ Written statement by John Hayes Minister of State (Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning) 21 December 2010

⁶ Lord Henly in a response to question by Lord Low of Dalston. Lords Hansard. 14 September 2011, Column GC283. Lords Committee scrutiny of Education Bill 2011.

⁷ The Education Act 2011 and the accompanying explanatory notes can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk

In addition section 70 of the Act places a duty on the Chief Executive of Skills Funding to secure the participation of employers in meeting the offer for the groups as described above.

An 'apprenticeship opportunity' is dependent on an opportunity to enter into a contract of employment. In addition the duty allows for regulations to be laid detailing those who might benefit from this duty to secure provision.

However the duty only comes into play for those who have already secured a place. Whilst the recognition of the need to prioritise funding is welcomed, limiting it to those who have already secured an apprenticeship place is unlikely to address fully the issue of increasing participation of disabled people. The aspiration is to ensure equal access to the redefined offer and further mechanisms should be considered.

Fully funding Apprentices with LDD aged 19-24: a proposal

Currently funding rates for Apprenticeships vary according to age. The National Apprenticeship Service sets out on its website in guidance for employers that:

'Apprenticeship funding is available from the National Apprenticeship Service. The size of the contribution varies depending on your sector and the age of the candidate. If the apprentice is aged 16–18 years old, you will receive 100 per cent of the cost of the training; if they are 19-24 years old, you will receive up to 50 per cent; if they are 25 years old or over you may only get a contribution depending on the sector and area in which you operate.

This is paid directly to the organisation that provides and supports the Apprenticeship; in most cases this will be a learning provider.⁸

This is problematic because as we have established, learners with LDD might take longer to become 'Apprenticeship ready' and thus fall in 19 plus age range where providers may receive only 50% of the funding.

This report proposes that Apprentices with LDD aged 19-24 should be funded at the fully funded (16-18) rate. This will incentivise learning providers and employers to recruit more young people with LDD.

Specifically, if the proposed new duty in the Act relating to young people with LDD aged 19-24 is to be meaningful and effective such a provision would be justified and essential. Furthermore it is crucial also that the availability of such funds are publicised to learning providers and employers alike to incentivise uptake.

⁸ <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/The-Basics.aspx>

The cost of this would differ depending on the framework but would mean that these Apprenticeships would cost the SFA an additional (approximately) £3,500 per Apprentice. This represents a huge long-term cost saving in comparison to the draw-down of a lifetime of benefits. This is in line with the economic case laid out in the recent National Audit Office report (described in Chapter 3) which showed how investing in supporting disabled people into work brought long term savings to the public purse.

Recommendation 19: Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the 19-24 cohort should be funded at the fully funded (16-18) rate. This will be crucial in meeting the duty laid out in the Apprenticeship Offer in the Education Act 2011

Chapter 6: Routes into Apprenticeships

In considering how to reverse the decline in Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) it is critical to think about how routes into Apprenticeships might be improved. Furthermore feedback from stakeholders has been that 'pre-apprenticeship' training or preparation is crucial for learners in this cohort.

Routes into Apprenticeships can be extensive for some young people with LDD and it will be essential to align the wider learning offer, including Foundation Learning (FL). Some stakeholders have expressed concern about the emphasis on low level qualifications in FL, when in some cases learners have more complex needs, including work related and other soft skills. The flexibility of the former e2e (Entry to Employment) provision could be very useful in the journey towards an apprenticeship, and it remains important that FL retains the flexibility to be personalised for learners with LDD.

Access to Apprenticeships

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 confirmed a paid job as the cornerstone of an Apprenticeship. Programme-led Apprenticeships were therefore discontinued. In July 2011 the National Apprenticeship Service published 'Apprenticeships – Delivery Models' which confirmed that Programme Led Apprenticeships (PLAs) would be phased out. Apprentices declaring an LDD made up a considerable number of those on PLAs (14.2% in 2010/11) and PLAs were seen by many as a useful crucial stepping-stone into a full Apprenticeship.

In response to concern about a cohort of young people who have the potential to succeed in Apprenticeships but who would have difficulty convincing an employer to take them on straight away, the Government has introduced a new Access to Apprenticeship pathway within the Apprenticeship programme. This was launched in August 2011. Through a customised menu of training and work experience drawn from an Apprenticeship framework, the Access pathway offers young people the opportunity to brush up skills such as literacy and numeracy and to prove themselves as keen, reliable workers. The aim is to secure a paid Apprenticeship place with an employer as quickly as possible – and certainly within a maximum of six months - so they can complete their training as any other apprentice would.

Access is aimed primarily at 16-18 year-olds, though eligibility extends up to age 24. The other eligibility criteria are that people need to be:

- assessed as being able to undertake and complete an Intermediate Level / Advanced Level Apprenticeship
- registered/designated as not in employment, education or training for 13 weeks or more and/or learners are eligible for, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support or Additional Social Needs (ASN)

Providers have expressed concerns over the flexibility of the Access Strand. Firstly providers described the perceived 'risk' in taking on a learner with LDD on the Access Strand. In order for them to complete they will need to secure employment within a relatively short period of time (within 6 months). Failure

to do so would result in being penalised. In addition while some learners may be ready to begin an Apprenticeship proper after only a few months others will need longer and currently that flexibility is not there. These concerns could be addressed if more pre-apprenticeship provision was available with the required flexibility, for instance, in FL as noted earlier in this chapter. We must accept that the Access to Apprenticeships strand will only be effective and suitable for those young people who are nearer the labour market, having had prior access to suitable and flexible provision, separately funded.

Another concern expressed by providers is around the eligibility criteria. If an individual does not qualify through the fact they have been NEET for 13 weeks they must be assessed as needing ALS/ALN against the Apprenticeship Funding regulations. As described earlier in this report there are bureaucratic barriers that deter some providers from using this funding stream.

Some respondents also pointed to the issues around the interplay between entering the Access Strand and benefit entitlements for those aged over 19. The requirement to work 30 hours may have an impact on benefit entitlement meaning that the Apprentice is financially worse off or disincentivised completely from participating.

Recommendation 20: Learners with LDD must be seen as a priority group within the Access Strand. Eligibility for the Access Strand should be based on a declaration of LDD, based on Equality Act 2010 definition, and not whether or not the learner is eligible for ALN, ASN or whether they have been NEET for 13 weeks.

Diversity in Apprenticeships Pilots

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has since its creation recognised that inequalities exist within Apprenticeships. In seeking to address this NAS is funding 16 pilots across the country that will deliver/test new delivery methods to engage more individuals from under represented groups including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pilots, which have been running since early 2011, are designed to mainstream key learning and good practice in the longer term. An interim evaluation on their progress is being carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES).

The IES have however pointed to the following emerging themes from the pilots focused on Apprentices with LDD.

1. There are significant challenges faced by some pilots who are seeking to increase participation of learners with LDD in the 16-18 cohort. This again adds weight to the evidence that many learners with LDD are not 'Apprenticeship ready' until they are over 18.
2. There is work to be done to encourage disabled people, their families and carers that Apprenticeships are a viable and rewarding route where

support is available. Advice and support is needed up front together with advice around the impact on benefits of taking up an Apprenticeship.

3. The pilots are demonstrating the importance of mentoring and on going information, advice and guidance. In many cases Apprentices with LDD benefit from continuous monitoring and support.
4. It is becoming clear that effective brokering with employers is particularly important for learners with LDD. Employers need to know the types of flexibilities and support they need to put in place as well as knowing that they can turn to a third party for advice

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Appendix B: Stakeholders

A number of stakeholders were consulted in the drafting of this and the previous report submitted in 2010. The nature of the consultation varied but predominately consisted of face to face and telephone interviews. Below is a complete list:

- Alliance for Sector Skills Councils
- Blackburn College
- Bolton Community College
- British Dyslexia Association
- Bromley College
- Department for Education, LLDD Advisory Group
- Derwen College (Specialist College)
- Greater Merseyside Learning Providers Federation
- Hertfordshire Pass
- Kensington and Chelsea College
- National Apprenticeship Service
- National Union of Students
- NIACE
- Ofsted
- Pure Innovations (supported employment organisation)
- Royal Borough of Kingston (14-19 Partnership)
- Russell Marlow Painter and Decorators (employer and winner of the National Apprenticeship Award, 2009 'Micro Employer of the Year')
- Skills Funding Agency
- TechDIS
- Training Plus Merseyside
- Weston College
- YMCA Training

There were also meetings with Provider Networks at national level (AELP) and local level (Greater Merseyside). In addition the views of the Government's Apprenticeships Working Group have also been considered here.

Organisations that were represented on this group included: Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE), Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, Mencap, RNIB, Council for Disabled Children, City & Guilds, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the Alliance for Sector Skills Council and Department of Health's "Getting a life" project.