

DATE: Tuesday June 14 2022

TIME: 15:30 - 16:30

METHOD: Hybrid Meeting

TOPIC: Flexible working and Apprenticeships

CHAIR: Lord Aberdare, Officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships

Lord Aberdare welcomed attendees and speakers and opened the session.

A short EGM took place to elect Richard Holden MP as the APPG's new Co-Chair to serve alongside Emma Hardy. Richard was duly elected.

Lord Aberdare then handed over to **Dr Jacqueline Hall, Head of Apprenticeships and Skills, BAE Systems Plc.**

Dr Hall said that the legacy of apprenticeships was that they had been around since the 12th century, and that hybrid apprenticeships should have an important role to play in the modern world. She said that BAE Systems are planning to take another 1000 apprentices on board over the next 12 months, noting that there are all sorts of nuances to hybrid apprenticeships. In terms of the learner, technology has an important part to play in shaping the future of hybrid apprenticeships. She reiterated that BAE are passionate about the life changing experience an apprenticeship can play.

Lord Aberdare thanked Dr Hall and introduced **Sue Parr, Director of Part-time Programmes and Work-based Education, Warwick Manufacturing Group, University of Warwick.**

Sue thanked Lord Aberdare and ran through her role. She said that WMG represent a variety of groups and that their work was very well received. There are many good reasons for not getting people to travel so far, and virtual working has been hugely helpful with this. Online delivery has helped a lot with training, which means people can do things at their own pace. She noted that companies have said they want to come back to more face to face, and that the transition from school to apprenticeship can be challenging for people. She noted that informal networking gives best chance for learning which can only really be achieved in person. At the moment, there is a real opportunity to see what the best form of hybrid is for everyone – a different size fits all, at different stages in their apprenticeship. She noted that virtual working has opened up a lot of opportunities and is a good challenge for providers, to ensure apprenticeship is still delivering.

Lord Aberdare thanked Sue, and handed over to **Michelle Price, Director of the HomeServe Foundation,** and **Liz Slee, Research and Public Affairs Specialist for the HomeServe Foundation.**

Liz thanked Lord Aberdare and said the HomeServe Foundation was set up as a section of HomeServe plc to tackle issues faced in trades recruitment for apprentices. Michelle added that she is at the coal face of apprenticeship recruitment, adding that the

HomeServe Academy mostly focused on gas apprenticeships. They noted that it is important that learners have flexibility in the curriculum, and have found that the kinds of learners that are attracted to the apprenticeships aren't normally very academically led but are very practical. They noted that when apprentices qualify for Gas Safe, it needs to be done practically normally, however during the pandemic they were able to run these online.

Lord Aberdare thanked Liz and Michelle and handed over to **Jackie Chapman, Managing Director, Capital City College Training.**

Jackie said that Capital City College Group (CCCG) was made up of 3 training colleges, and that she was responsible for apprenticeships across the group and that CCCG work with training provider across a variety of fields, a total of 33 training fields. She noted the difficulty faced in switching to virtual learning for apprenticeships, using pharmacy apprenticeships as an example - they had 100 of them working in the NHS, and had to change their hours completely and had to employ breaks in learning to maintain social distancing. She noted that younger apprentices tend to do the business admin apprenticeships, and have been most affected by pandemic, as 16-18 year olds were worst affected by the lack of interaction career-wise, and that CCCG recognised they received additional support and made sure they did, with assessors working evening shifts to give support to younger apprentices. What they've found coming out of the pandemic is that hybrid apprenticeships have been embraced to an extent with some online modules, but that there is not one size fits all – we need to make sure there is some flexibility of support.

Lord Aberdare thanked Jackie and opened the session to questions from the audience. He asked speakers what the Government could do to make things work better.

Baroness Garden asked what their assessment of the information that young people receive when coming to providers is – how much do they know initially?

Jackie said CCCG have a team that goes out to colleges to assist with liaison and 'evangelism'. Sue added that overall outreach from providers to schools has been improving but has been poor. Liz mentioned the Try-a-Trade initiative from HomeServe and said they'd be launching a report on it by the end of next month. Dr Hall said BAE have been investing in technology to provide information and guidance – there is still room for improvement, especially with initiatives like T-Levels coming in.

Baroness Verma said apprenticeships are only going to become more available if big organisations make them more available. There are communities that are not engaged enough in lots of things – white working/non-working/poorer BAME areas in particular – but especially in apprenticeships, even though apprenticeships can be a valuable tool for social mobility.

Liz and Michelle said there are a lot of providers who are just SMEs or one-person businesses who can't face the amount of red tape involved in taking on an apprentice – the HomeServe Foundation are focused on supporting these. Try-a-Trade is trying to bring small employers into schools to help kids understand apprenticeships, with West Midlands Mayor Andy Street a member of the Foundation's board.

Baroness Verma noted that LEPS were meant to help with these but haven't.

Liz added that the HomeServe Foundation were working with Amazing Apprenticeships on these, but that it is a long process.

Sue added that SME's find the admin and compliance paperwork too much work for small organisations. She said we need more support for them and different ways for SME's to engage with apprenticeships.

Jackie noted that one of the industries with a lot of self-employed people is the creative industry. CCCG have clustered a group of employers with apprentices together to give them three months with different specialist employers on a rotational basis.

Baroness Garden asked if the apprenticeship levy was helping. Jackie said Mitie are an example of an employer using the levy well, but there are still lots of companies who don't understand the levy and still see it as a tax. The system doesn't allow for even small errors in levy service, with far too much of CCCG's time going on levy support as a result.

James Deller from KCL Hospital asked how you approach organisations and businesses with a regimented shift system as a provider of apprenticeships.

Lord Aberdare asked panellists for an idea each for how parliamentarians might tackle these issues.

Dr Hall said it wasn't a black and white issue and that the Government needed to keep listening and talking – industry and apprenticeships need to meet the needs of businesses.

Sue added that it needed to be less difficult for transitions and changes within the system to take place.

Liz and Michelle said they had noticed a real drop off in apprenticeship uptake when the incentives were taken away – they need to be reintroduced.

Jackie agreed with the previous points, and added that a lot of apprentices are dropping out once completing training without doing End Point Assessment, adding that she would like to see greater provision for transfer of the levy.

Lord Aberdare said it was a great topic that could be explored further. He thanked attendees and ended the session.