



The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP

Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education

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7 February 2024

Dear Colleague,

I am sure that you will have settled into another busy but rewarding term for your school and its pupils.

This week sees National Apprenticeship Week (5 – 11 February) which highlights the positive impact apprenticeships and skills have on economic growth, productivity, and creating opportunities for local businesses, communities, and individuals. The entire week also provides a great platform to inspire and excite students about the apprenticeship and skills options that can shape and boost their futures.

Apprenticeships work for individuals up and down the country. 93% of apprentices that complete remain in great jobs or undertake further training. Median earnings for an apprentice at level 3 were £18,910 one year after achievement; rising 32% to £24,920 five years on. We need more young people to seize these benefits.

Two months ago, I spent a remarkable morning at the Oasis Academy in Brislington, watching some brilliant Apprentice Ambassadors captivate and enthral 300 pupils from Year 10 about the benefits of apprenticeships. The pupils were intrigued by hearing about apprenticeship experiences. The school told me that 92 per cent of the students were more likely to apply for an apprenticeship than before the session.

That impressive activity was created in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network – a national group of employers and apprentices dedicated to promoting and championing apprenticeships as a thriving career route.

In National Apprenticeship Week, Wednesday 7 February is designated as 'Apprentice Wednesday'. That day, I want to encourage as many apprentices as possible to connect with local schools and offer to present to an assembly or a workshop on the advantages of apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Ambassador Network will look to engage local apprentices to support schools with this.

The Careers & Enterprise Company is also backing this initiative. Careers Hubs around the country are talking to schools about 'Apprentice Wednesday' to ensure as many students as possible can take part.

This also aligns to the strengthened provider access legislation enabling schools to provide secondary pupils with a series of meaningful encounters with apprenticeship players. Schools are consistently undertaking strong work embedding careers

education, information, advice and guidance into our ambitious education and skills system. Careers education must therefore ensure all young people have information about all their choices so they can make informed decisions. It's fitting then that we can use National Apprenticeship Week as an avenue for schools to play their part igniting greater interest in technical education options.

I genuinely hope that your school will be able to support 'Apprentice Wednesday'.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Halfon', written in a cursive style.

**The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education**