

Commerce Cornwall Column – Local Enterprise Partnership

Apprenticeships

Latest data shows that in 2014-15 there were 5,247 new apprenticeships started in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, which was a 15% increase on the previous 12 months.

The increase in numbers is an encouraging trend and suggests that some of the myths around apprenticeships being somehow a 'lesser' route to quality employment are starting to be debunked.

With some apprenticeship qualifications available to degree level, for many this is a route to a quality well paid job without doing a traditional university degree.

The LEP is working with employers and providers to increase the number and quality of apprenticeships available so that they can be confident they have a pipeline of workers coming through that can do the jobs of the future. However, there is still a shortage of young people applying for current vacancies.

The needs of the jobs market is constantly shifting and our population is ageing, so we have to make sure that we also create opportunities to support mature workers to retrain as well as focus on the younger generation.

Boosting the number and quality of apprenticeships is part of the Cornwall Devolution Deal and to help us meet these aims we have set up a task group that includes local businesses and education providers to examine how we make it easier for businesses to take on apprentices, especially if those businesses are very small.

This week we are also supporting a number of events linked National Apprenticeship Week and we support a campaign by our Cornish MPs to create at least 100 apprenticeships in 100 days.

We are also extending our successful Enterprise Adviser pilot to work with schools and businesses to promote new career opportunities. This programme will help promote the benefits of apprenticeships so that schools, parents and young people are aware of the routes available through vocational education to skilled jobs.

And the Government is pushing ahead with its 2020 Vision for apprenticeships, including the launch of the Digital Apprenticeship Service to support small businesses.

To find out more please visit www.cornwallapprenticeships.com

Clare Harris is the Employment & Skills Manager at the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP

www.cioslep.com [@clarriscornwall](https://twitter.com/clarriscornwall)