Apprenticeship programme continues to grow strong

Thursday 11 October, 2012

New statistics published today show a continued increase in the number of people taking up apprenticeships. The provisional data shows that for the full 2011/12 academic year (August 2011 to July 2012) 502,500 people started an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship starts rose from 457,200 in 2010/11, at all levels, with particularly strong growth at advanced and higher levels.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock said:

"Hitting the half-million mark is a momentous achievement for this Government's apprenticeship programme.

“It shows our passion for skills and is a ringing endorsement from employers and apprentices alike, who are reaping the benefits of a more highly-skilled workforce.

"This rise comes despite tougher rules to make apprenticeships more rigorous.

"I am particularly pleased to see such a big increase in the number of people signing up for advanced level and higher level apprenticeships, which open the road for people wanting to become engineers, lawyers and accountants.

“More must be done to ensure apprenticeships are more rigorous, higher quality, and more employer focused. We are introducing tougher standards, including a stipulation that all apprenticeships must last a minimum of 12 months.

“There is much more to do to ensure everyone in our country fulfils their potential, but the apprenticeship programme shows the Government's passion for delivering the skills Britain needs.

"And my message to employers is simple: apprenticeships make good business sense. I urge all employers to get involved."

The data also showed higher levels of learners on Skills for Life courses to improve their basic skills, with 1,545,500 participating during the 2011/12 academic year.

Notes to editors:

1. The full statistical first release can be viewed at
http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current

2. The Government's economic policy objective is to achieve 'strong, sustainable and balanced growth that is more evenly shared across the country and between industries.' It set four ambitions in the ‘Plan for Growth’, published at Budget 2011:

· To create the most competitive tax system in the G20
· To make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business
· To encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy
· To create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.

Work is underway across Government to achieve these ambitions, including progress on more than 250 measures as part of the Growth Review. Developing an industrial strategy gives new impetus to this work by providing businesses, investors and the public with more clarity about the long-term direction in which the Government wants the economy to travel.

3. BIS's online newsroom contains the latest press notices, speeches, as well as video and images for download. It also features an up to date list of BIS press office contacts. See
http://www.bis.gov.uk/newsroom for more information.
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