

Proposals for Gainshare

Enhanced Apprenticeship Training Agency/Broker (EATA)

Apprenticeships starts were down 52.3% on the same period in 2019, 16-18 year olds down 73.2%. This decline in numbers of young people taking up an apprenticeship is consistent with the national trend but exacerbated in SCR because of the skills deficit and the focus on low levels of skills development. It will also be exacerbated by the loss of opportunities in sectors traditionally seen as offering 'entry level' jobs for young people e.g. hospitality.

The apprenticeship levy represents a significant investment in skills by employers and the MCA could to take a leading role to:

- ensure that employers engage with apprenticeships and understand / acknowledge the value it can add to their business
- ensure that apprenticeship opportunities align with labour market priorities, whether that be volumes of jobs or addressing skills challenges
- ensure that individuals see apprenticeships as a good progression option linked to future job / career opportunities
- ensure that the quality of apprenticeship experiences across South Yorkshire is high, and particularly in the post pandemic world that apprentices are able to complete their programmes.
- ensure progression pathways to give young people who are not quite ready to start an apprenticeship and opportunity to acquire the skills / experience they need

A series of measures are proposed:

Set up an Apprenticeship Hub to take the lead for the MCA in driving quality and volume across South Yorkshire, working with employers, providers, careers services and local authorities. Critically, it would promote a narrative about the value of apprenticeships and where priorities for apprenticeships sit considering current and future labour market priorities.

The Hub could also become an Apprenticeship Training Agency to provide additional support to young people whose apprenticeships are at risk post pandemic and for those who face additional barriers to completing an apprenticeship such as those with SEND / care leavers.

As an ATA, the MCA could:

- focus on businesses whose order books currently do not allow them to commit to employing an apprentice for the full period of the Apprenticeship but need a pipeline of trained employees when the economy picks up.
- support with recruitment – finding the right apprentice to meet the employers' needs and targeting employers in recovery / growth sectors;
- responsibility for the wages, tax, National Insurance as well as administration and performance management;
- supervision of the apprentice during the Apprenticeship period
- links with an approved training provider and support to both the apprentice and host employer throughout the Apprenticeship;

We propose that the ATA model could become an Extended ATA model, giving it a real focus on progression and a pipeline of talent. It could then step into the space de-risking the taking on of apprentices for employers who wish to take one on but are unable to in the current economic climate. It could also broker opportunities for young people to carry out traineeships as a pathway to apprenticeships.

Through the CSR, the MCA has asked for flexibility to pool and manage levy transfer funds, to support apprenticeship take up in smaller businesses aligned with our priorities for recovery and growth.

Kickstart South Yorkshire 25+

The SCR has the tenth highest economic inactivity rate across all LEAs; 23.1% of people aged 16 to 64 are economically inactive (around 266,500 individuals) and the impact of the pandemic is set to worsen this position. Young people are expected to be hardest hit by the consequences of the pandemic and SCR will prioritise effective implementation of the 16-24 programme. However, older people will also be affected and, coupled with existing skills challenges SCR proposes to put in place a parallel programme - Kickstart South Yorkshire – for people aged 25+. There has been some good preparatory work that could align with the Kickstart model, including Green Retrofit Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) approach with transferability to Modern Methods of Construction and Advanced Manufacturing and digital. This proposal would sit as part of a package of measures aimed at sustaining and creating good jobs in the local economy, with integrated support for individuals and businesses to create an inclusive economy. A key priority would be to support a strong and diverse private sector which can deliver sustained jobs and growth. The key will be engaging with businesses and a clear offer and ask in return.