

Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub

Apprenticeship Tech Project Findings

September 2022

'To help every young person find their best next step.'

Project Background

- In 2017, the government introduced the apprenticeship levy where employers were given £15,000 to offset against tax payments for apprenticeships.
- In Wiltshire 5,010 people began their apprenticeships in the 2019/20 academic year (DfE)
- This represented a drop of 11 per cent from 5,620 the previous year, and a steep decline of 22 per cent from the 6,460 in 2016/17 – when the levy came into effect.

Project Description

In September 2021 the Swindon & Wiltshire Careers Hub bid for and secured £20,000 of funding to run a project that would focus on apprenticeships.

The aim of this project was to understand what the current barriers may be for a young person when considering/taking up an apprenticeship, and for a business to offering apprenticeships or filling their apprenticeship vacancies.

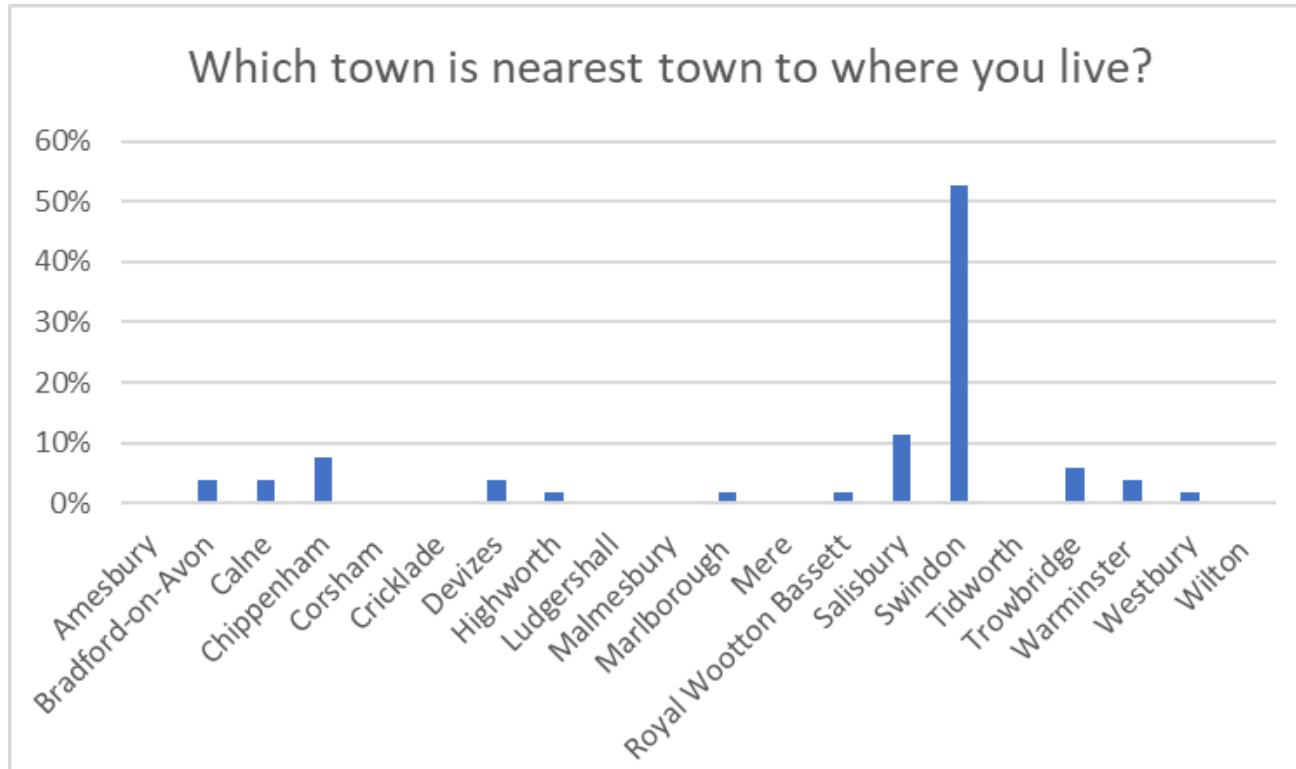
To do this, we proposed to undertake a survey with young people and local businesses. We would facilitate discussions with both groups and use data already captured from other sources to understand what these barrier may be.



Young person survey feedback

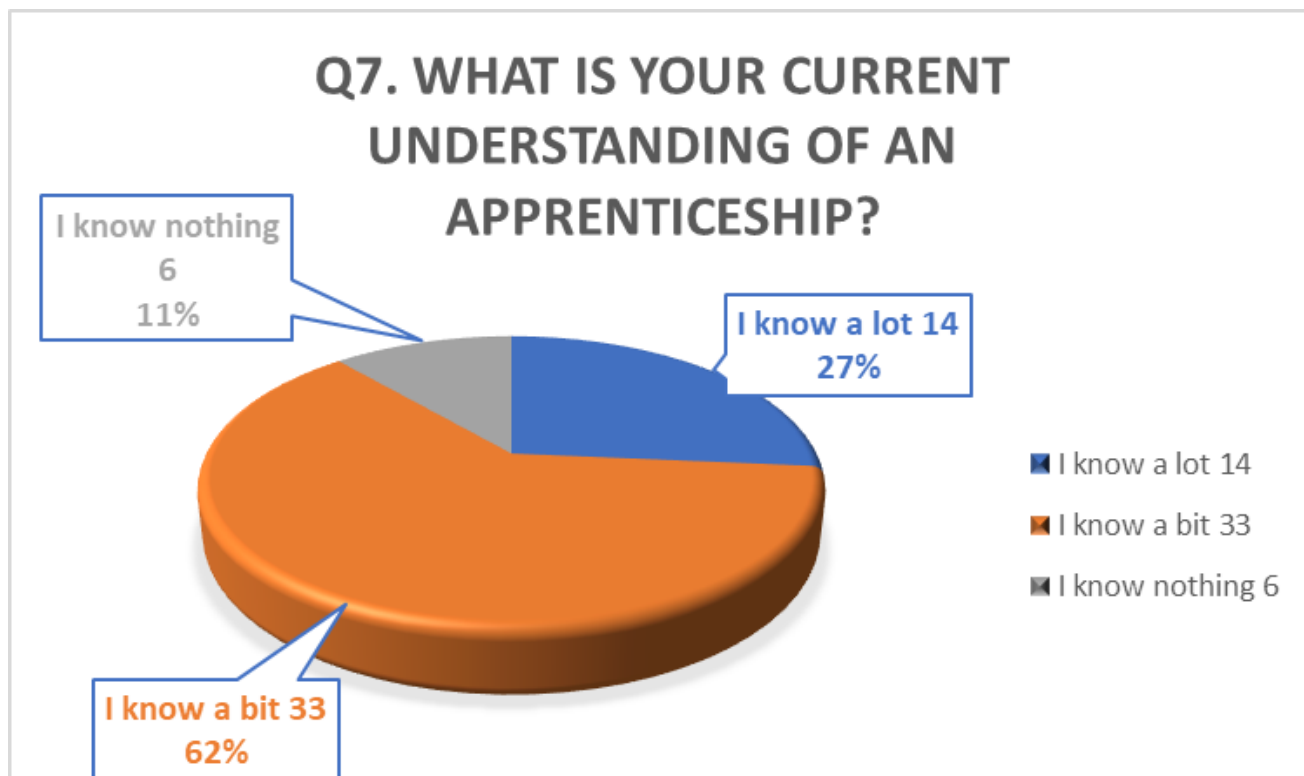
53 young people between the ages of
16-24 completed the survey across
Swindon and Wiltshire

Respondents location



The highest returns came from young people living in the Swindon area with over 50%. Returns from within the Wiltshire Council area were low yet spread out with Salisbury registering the highest return with just over 11%. 44% of all response came from those in the 16–18-year group and 66% said they were currently in college.

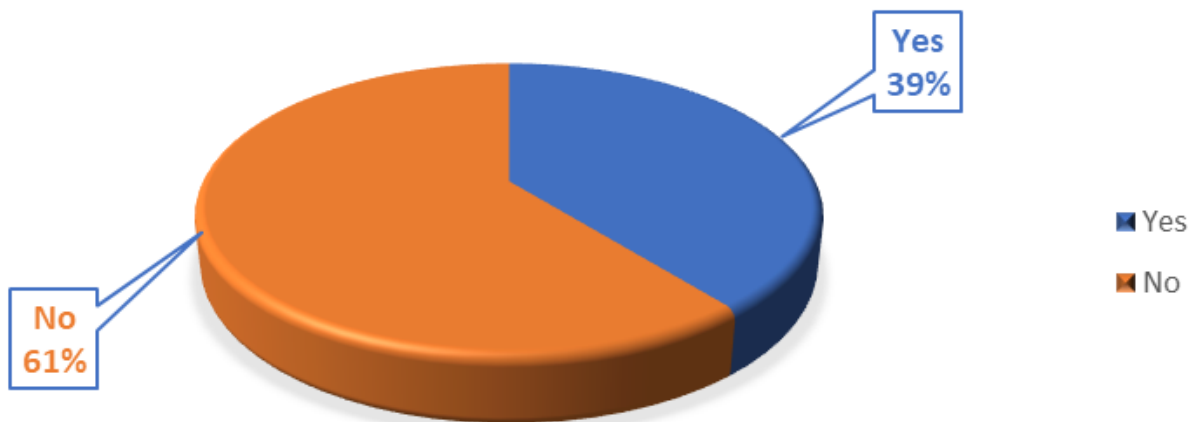
Current knowledge of apprenticeships



Over 70% of those completing the survey had little or no knowledge of apprenticeships. Those who had some knowledge of apprenticeships obtained this from school or parents. With only 15% obtaining information from other sources.

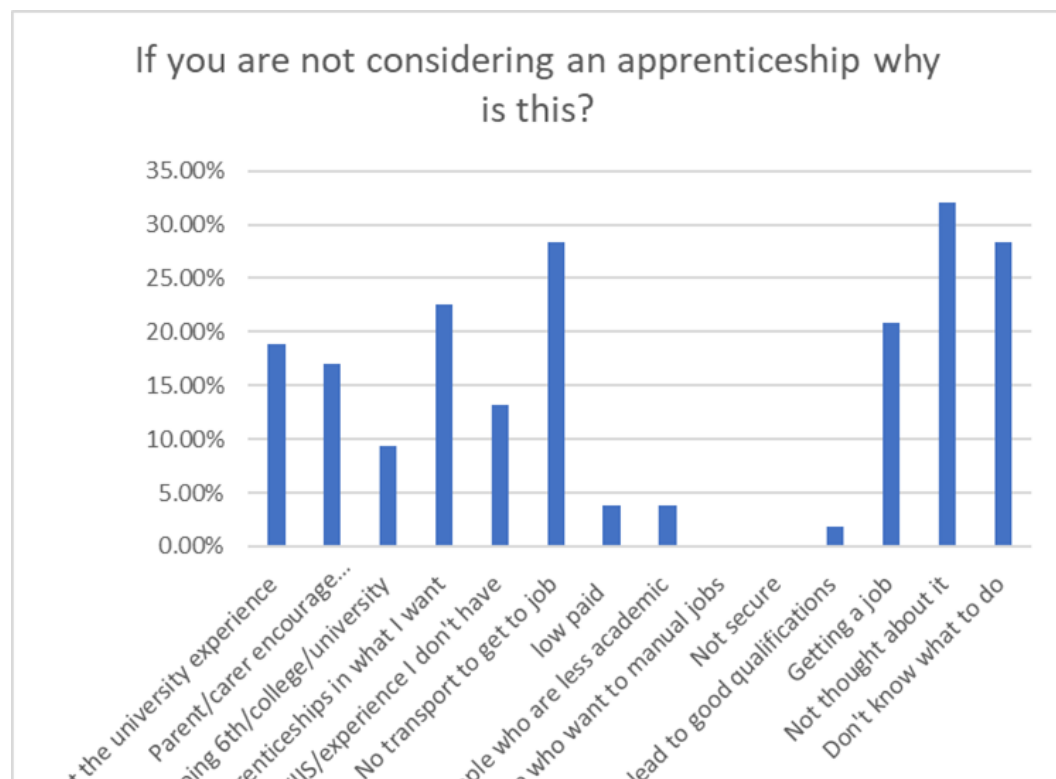
Current knowledge of apprenticeships

IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT APPLYING FOR APPRENTICESHIP WOULD YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR VACANCIES?



Despite extensive work in schools carried out by The Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge for schools and colleges programme (ASK) 61% of respondents said they would not know where to look for an apprenticeship vacancy. This is supported by a recent post sixteen strategy survey conducted by Swindon Borough Council when most of the parent/carer response felt young people were not provided with enough information on the opportunities.

Barriers to considering an apprenticeship



We asked the young people why they were not considering an apprenticeship. 31% said they had not even thought about them which returned the highest response, closely followed by, they did not know what they wanted to do, and difficulty getting to an apprenticeship both with over 28%. This was further supported by Swindon Borough Councils Post 16 Survey when most parents and carers stated transport and travel times were an issue.

Focus group feedback

What may stop you considering an apprenticeship		
Schools tended to push university as a post 18 option	More support available to apply for university than an apprenticeship	Home educated do not have the same opportunity to learn about apprenticeships
I can't do what want as an apprenticeship	Getting to an apprenticeship would be a issue	Choosing an apprenticeship is very final
My parents want me to go to Uni	Not great jobs	I don't know enough about them

A focus group was also held with the youth cabinet members for Wiltshire.

A Padlet was set up to gather their thoughts on apprenticeships

<https://padlet.com/annette120/u2qwg4bk1otxmlgs>



Employer survey feedback

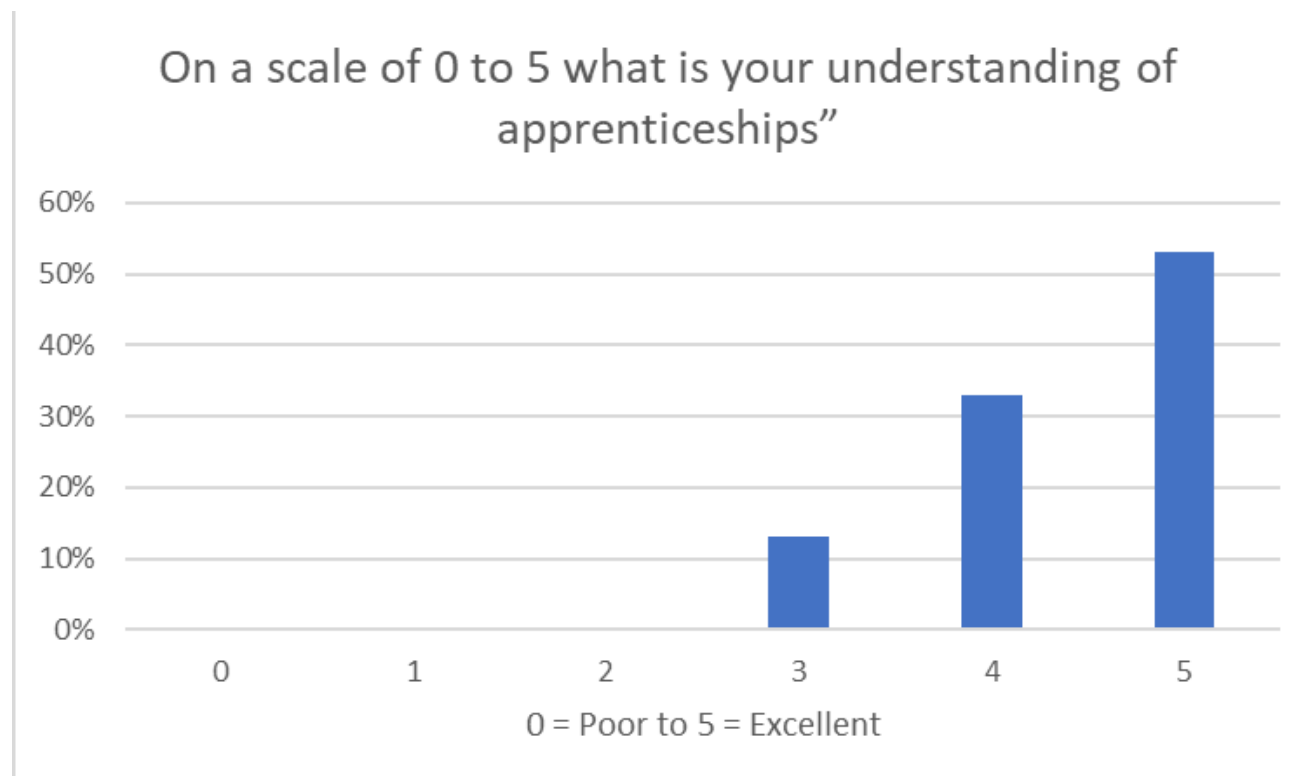
Despite an extensive promotional campaign with partners and stakeholders only 15 businesses completed the survey across Swindon and Wiltshire.

Respondents location



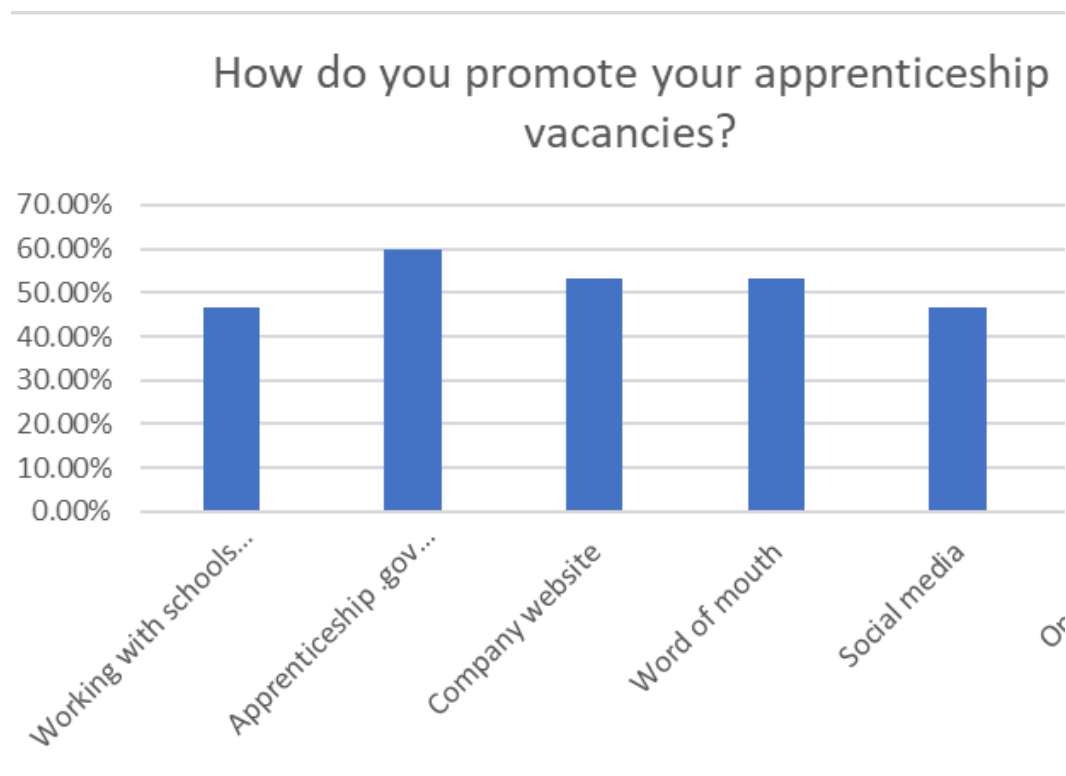
The largest return was from businesses in the Salisbury area 40% Swindon, Trowbridge, and Chippenham on 33%. Returns were greatest from smaller businesses 2-49 employees 47%, and construction had the largest returns of all sectors with 33%.

Understanding of apprenticeships



53% of those surveyed felt they had an excellent understanding of apprenticeships with over 90% saying they recruited apprentices under the age of 24 and paid above the minimum apprenticeship . 80% said the primary reason for recruiting apprentices was to grow their own talent.

Advertising/promoting vacancies



Over 60% of those surveyed offered level 2/3 apprenticeships with 40% offering level 4. The primary way in which business promoted their apprenticeships was via the .gov apprenticeship website with 60% of businesses using this as a method to recruit but over 50% recruit also using word of mouth. Just over 40% worked with schools.

Employer focus group

Over 50% of those surveyed said they had found it difficult to recruit to the apprenticeship roles they had advertised.

Swindon and Wiltshire businesses were invited to take part in a focus group. A Padlet was set up to gather their feedback

<https://padlet.com/annette120/eumwp03spxkg5j1c>

Feedback mirrored what businesses had said when responding to the survey.

Do you find it difficult offering apprenticeships and recruiting to these roles? Why do you think this is the case?

New ways of working.	Pressure on managers can put them off from considering taking on an apprentice.	Location and transport are an issue	Unrealistic expectations on both sides
Schools don't promote sector as a valued career choice. Poor careers advice	Resourcing has been a challenge. Team is small	Shortage of applicants for certain types of Apprenticeship	Visibility young people don't know who we are, and what opportunities we have.
Lack of employability skills, or suitable candidates.	Off the job training hard to accommodate	Found the .gov website not user friendly	Looking at new apprenticeships but the standards are just not there
Schools push Uni and don't support students to apply for an apprenticeship.	Not advertising at the right time	Don't really want the job and it is a waste of everyone's time.	YP applying for an apprenticeship without understanding role.

How could the barriers faced by businesses and young people be addressed?

Market & promote apprenticeships to young people in a way that appeals to them.	Training/event for businesses on recruiting an apprentice.	Business could run a lunch time after school club to raise profile.	Support in school's to complete applications for apprenticeships.
Encourage schools to equally promote careers/sectors. Get them into a business.	Business holds open days to promote apprenticeships, invite young people in to see what they do.	Fund/bursary to support those that struggle with travel? Life skills to help young budget for travel costs.	Target parents/carers to get them to encourage young people to look at apprenticeships.

Conclusions

Analysing the returns from young people and business it was evident that there are **themes that are common to both groups**.

- Knowledge and information about current apprenticeships and opportunities
- Raising awareness
- Barriers to being able to offer or accept an apprenticeship
- Misconceptions

In order for apprenticeships to be regarded as a genuine career pathway, it is important that their value is understood as a way of helping young people progress in the labour market.

Conclusions

Whilst a more long term approach needs to be considered, a number of projects could be put in place to help to bridge this gap and go some way to increasing the percentage of school leavers considering apprenticeship's.

We are already working with schools to promote apprenticeships but we now need to think about who and what influences young people when making future career choices and connect with them on a more social emotional level.

Working both in and outside of a school setting with parents and employers we will be able to embed this message further.

Quick win projects

Project	Brief	Detail
'On the Busses' Become, Hire, Inspire!	To raise awareness of apprenticeships. A county wide promotional campaign using public transport networks.	4 week campaign on busses across Swindon and Wiltshire using bus rears, supper sides, and in journey posters, and railway stations to promote apprenticeships. Embedded QR codes will allow us to track click throughs via web link
'It's Hip to do an ApprenticesHip'	Event to be run in Salisbury in partnership with stakeholders and businesses aimed at parents, young people, schools, and business.	Afternoon/evening event to be hosted late Jan/Feb, Engaging Format Short talks, challenges, that can be repeated, during the event. Employers stands in the lobby area, CV clinic, 'Speed dating' with an employer, meet an apprentice, escape room where the students solve career related problems.
'Powered By'	Promotional give away e.g. water bottles	to be used at careers events to encourage young people to complete feedback and further promote the benefits of apprenticeships. Bottles will have a link to https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/

Long-term Projects

‘Get on Board’

Pilot transport bursary project – To support financially excluded young people to be able to accept and sustain an apprenticeship offering up to 80% off bus or rail transport for an agreed period.

‘B.E.S.T’

Business Exchange for Subject Teachers. Working alongside schools and business to create opportunities for subjects leads to spend time with a local business working in their subject field and reciprocating that for businesses to make a return visit to the school to engage in a lesson with that teacher.

‘Clocking In’

Series of TIKTOK Videos featuring Swindon & Wiltshire businesses and their young apprentices

Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub



Contact us: CareersHub@Wiltshire.gov.uk

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'To help every young person find their best next step.'