

Young People's Education and Skills: Apprenticeship Sub-Group

AGENDA

Chair:	Rebecca Davey	Title:	Assistant Director – Employment, Business and Skills, London Borough of Waltham Forest
Date:	10 June 2021	Time:	10.00 – 11.30 via Teams
Officer:	Tim Gallagher	Email:	Tim.gallagher@londoncouncils.gov.uk

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| Item 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies | Rebecca Davey
Chair (5mins) |
| Item 2. Notes of the last meeting and matters arising | Rebecca Davey
Chair (5mins) |
| Item 3. Update on the work of the Institute for Apprenticeships | Jill Nicholls, Head of Route Reviews,
Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (30mins) |
| Item 4. Results of Annual Data Collection | Tim Gallagher
London Councils (20mins) |
| Item 5. Updates and discussion: | |
| • London Councils | Tim Gallagher
London Councils (5mins) |
| • Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) | Andy Lunn
ESFA (10mins) |
| • Local Government Association (LGA) | Jamie Saddler
LGA (5mins) |
| • ASG members | All (5mins) |
| Item 6. AOB, close and next meeting | Rebecca Davey
Chair (5mins) |

Date of next meeting: 16th September 2021, 10.00am – 11.30am

Young People's Education and Skills (YPES)

Apprenticeship Sub-Group

Date 11 March 2021 **Venue** London Councils

Meeting Chair Rebecca Davey, Head of Business Growth, Employment, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Contact Officer: Anna-Maria Volpicelli

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Attendance:

Members

Alan Galloway	London Borough of Hillingdon
Anthony Hartigan	London Borough of Redbridge
Antoinette Thorne	London Borough of Bromley
Bridget Arnold Carol	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Stewart Caroline	London Borough of Lewisham
Odogwu	City of Westminster
Cheryl Jones	London Borough of Bexley
Deborah Harrington	Royal Borough of Kingston
Denise McShane	London Borough of Hounslow
Fabiola Palermo	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Iona Jackson-Benjamin	OneSource/London Boroughs of Havering and Newham
Ishma Lakhwani-Coalo	London Borough of Hounslow
Ivan McDougall	City of London
Jack Biggs	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Jamie Saddler	Local Government Association
Katie Compton	London Borough of Croydon
Lorraine Pearce	London Borough of Haringey
Lorna Fraser	London Borough of Southwark
Marcia Thomas	London Borough of Harrow
Melody Thornton	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Michael Marshall	London Borough of Camden
Michelle Fitzgerald	London Borough of Brent
Rebecca Davey (Chair)	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Rebecca Heptinstall	London Borough of Islington

Sarah-Jane Marcello	London Borough of Hackney
Sheree Burke	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Silver Chida	OneSource/London Boroughs of Havering and Newham
Susan Pieterse	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Vanita Nicholls	London Borough of Ealing
Varsha Mistry-Hand	London Borough of Havering

In attendance

Andrew Lunn	Education & Skills Funding Agency
Kashif Mirza	London Progression Collaboration

Officers

Tim Gallagher	London Councils
Anna-Maria Volpicelli	London Councils

Apologies

Alpa Ruparelia	City of Westminster
Alexandra Kelly	London Borough of Sutton and RB of Kingston upon Thames
Carol Stewart	London Borough of Lewisham
Eileen Gallagher	City of Westminster
Huma Hadi	London Borough of Lewisham
Justine Guynan	OneSource/London Boroughs of Havering and Newham
Karen Taylor	London Borough of Enfield
Katharine Owen	London Borough of Havering
Maxine Sobers	London Borough of Haringey
Sam Burgess	Royal Borough of Kingston

1 Welcome Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 Rebecca Davey, Chair, welcomed members to the meeting and invited those new to the group to introduce themselves.

2 Notes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The notes of the last meeting were agreed and Tim Gallagher (London Councils) confirmed there were no outstanding actions.

3 London Progression Collaboration

- 3.1 Kashif Mirza of the London Progression Collaboration (LPC) joined the meeting and spoke to his presentation. The LPC is a project co-delivered by the GLA and IPPR supported and funded by JP Morgan and the Mayor of London. The

project aims are to create good-quality apprenticeship opportunities in London by 2021, primarily through the use of levy transfers.

- 3.2 The LPC initially focused on just three sectors: retail, hospitality and health. Due to COVID-19, this has been extended to include digital and health. They are looking to extend the project which is currently funded to September 2021. They are working around 'Reskilling for Recovery', looking at how funds can be used to generate levy transfer opportunities, including with London boroughs. Featured case studies included in the presentation were from Lambeth, Islington, Hounslow and Harrow.
- 3.3 Demand for levy funds is outstripping supply so LPC are putting out a call for action which includes seeking pledges for levy funds from local authorities to support London Ambulance Service apprenticeships and apprenticeships which follow on from Kickstart placements.
- 3.4 The Chair thanked Kashif for his presentation, adding that it is good to hear about the successes so far. Opening the item to questions, it was asked how funding can be used for courses that last a year and which cut across two financial years. In response, Kashif advised that LPC can help and support with forecasting and members are welcome to get in touch to discuss further. It was also asked whether potential apprentices recruited via the LPC's work are necessarily from the borough or placed with an employer in borough. LPC have lots of conversations to understand borough priorities, and work with them and SMEs as flexibly as possible.

4 Results of January 2021 ASG survey

- 4.1 Tim Gallagher, London Councils, spoke to his paper and presentation covering the results from the Apprenticeship Sub-group survey carried out at the beginning of the year. The purpose of the survey was to understand how borough apprenticeship programmes have been affected by the pandemic and to gain an insight into which topics members would like to see covered at future meetings.
- 4.2 The presentation highlighted key findings and ranked future topics in chart format ending with possible discussion points.
- 4.3 The Chair thanked the seventeen boroughs that completed the survey, asking if anyone had anything to add in terms of future topics, if they would like to raise anything or be willing to share/present on examples of best practice (e.g. in pastoral care), to be in contact with the London Councils team.

- 4.4 The Skills for Jobs White Paper includes a number of new provisions relating to apprenticeships which could boost take-up, including making apprenticeships 'portable' between employers and establishing a match-making service for levy transfers. LPC has been working with the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), looking at how an online pledge function via the Digital Apprenticeship System (DAS) might work. The LPC believes that such a system would still require additional support, along the lines of what the LPC currently provides.

5 Updates and discussion of Covid-19 impact on borough apprenticeships programmes:

London Councils – Annual Apprenticeship and Levy Data Collections

- 5.1. If permitted, the London Apprenticeships Awards will take place as a live event in Painters' Hall in central London on 1 September this year. The nomination process will open 10th May with a deadline for submissions of 11th June. Criteria is being updated and Tim reminded colleagues to please use these in applications as otherwise it makes judging more difficult and can be the cause of an application not proceeding in the process as far as it could.
- 5.2 There is a temporary working group for Kickstart and anyone interested in participating in future meetings should contact Tim directly.
- 5.3 The ASG Teams channel appears to be working well but if anyone has any feedback, please be in contact.
- 5.4 Presenting slides on the Annual Apprenticeship Data Collection, Tim advised we are proposing to add the data on levy spend (usually included in data collected on pay-scales) to the upcoming collection of data on apprenticeship recruitment as these data sets are more closely linked. Any member who has any suggestions about how to re-word the proposed additional questions on progression and retention should let London Councils know. The survey request will be sent to members Monday 22nd March with deadline for responses 30 April. Results will be presented at the 10th June meeting.
- 5.5 The Chair thanked Tim, adding these data sets provide useful benchmarking for boroughs. However, we do not want the survey to become an onerous task for colleagues. Michael Marshall, Camden, agreed that the completion data is important, useful in tracking destinations and useful in terms of thinking about progression but questions around completions need to be considered carefully.

Education Skills Funding Agency – National Apprenticeship Week

- 5.6 Andrew Lunn advised that the new match-making service for levy transfers would be in place by 1st August on the DAS. He moved on to his presentation of key outcomes from this year's National Apprenticeship Week (NAW). There had been good support on social media and turn-out for events was good, especially in the current climate. In the Chancellor's Budget, it was announced that apprenticeship incentive payments will be extended to 30 September 2021 (due to end originally 1st April), with an increased cash incentive of £3000 per new apprentice regardless of age for employers. There will be £7 million to support portable apprenticeships, where an employee can work with several employers in one sector e.g. construction. Additionally, £126 million will be used to create 40,000 traineeships in the 2021-22 academic year.
- 5.7 ESFA Account Managers have investigated how cash payment incentives have been used and found they have been used in different and creative ways.
- 5.8 The Chair thanked Andy for his update and queried if the impact of these measures will be recorded. In response, Andy said this is still in its infancy so there will be more information going forward. Asked why payments have been levelled at all ages when young people have been most impacted in current climate, Andy said it was to create a strong incentive for employers to recruit and invest.
- 5.9 A question was asked about a potential extension to the Kickstart programme. Andy confirmed that, so far, no announcement has been made about whether the programme will be extended beyond the end of 2021.

Local Government Association

- 5.10 Jamie Saddler advised that the Local Government Association's reaction to the budget, particularly the increase and extension of the incentive payments, was positive, although they will continue to lobby central government for further flexibilities. Having additional resource will hopefully increase take-up. The proposal for flexible/portable apprenticeships gives local government plenty of options, for example by sharing apprentices or using a rotational system.
- 5.11 LGA is speaking with ESFA colleagues around pooled PAYE services, especially for those without access, and options are now being put to service leaders at the ESFA. They hope to hear how these are received next week and will share with colleagues. Jamie suggested that any borough that hasn't raised the issues so far do so with the ESFA helpdesk.

- 5.12 On the 31st March, there will be a webinar on Making the Best Use of Levy Transfers which will have speakers from the ESFA and colleagues are welcome to attend. Jamie went on to advise that there is still time to sign up for Local Government Apprentice of the Year Awards 2021 adding that there is a cost involved of £149 per place. Details will be found in the LGA Newsletter but anyone wishing to speak with him on this, or any other matter, is welcome to email him directly.

Item 6. AOB and close

- 6.1 Alan Galloway, Hillingdon, asked to raise a couple of items: new apprenticeship payments are paid directly into DAS accounts but do not allow for payments directly to schools. Payments need to be passported on from the local authority. Iona, Havering and Newham advised they collect the incentive payment and deal with it as a journal transfer via school's finance. The second question was around pathways for L3 to L6 providers, and whether they train together. Sarah-Jane Marcello, Hackney, said they are looking at it and trying to figure out a pathway. Alan, Sarah and Michelle Fitzgerald, Brent, agreed to speak further off-line.

Young People's Education and Skills: Apprenticeship Sub-Group

Analysis of London Borough apprenticeship data 2020-21

Contact: Tim Gallagher

Item 4

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Summary:

In April 2021, London Councils collected data on apprenticeships in London boroughs during the 2020-21 financial year. Data was collected on apprenticeship starts, apprenticeship completions, progression from apprenticeships and apprenticeship levy spend. The data collected on starts was broken down by age, ethnicity, disability and level of apprenticeship. This is the first year that we have collected data on completions and progression, and the first time we have collected data on apprenticeship levy spend in conjunction with the data on starts. All 32 London boroughs and the City of London submitted returns.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused considerable disruption to the operations of local authorities during this period. It is therefore unsurprising that the data shows a drop in the number of apprenticeships created compared to the previous year.

The data submitted shows that London boroughs generated a total of 3,137 apprenticeships during the 2020-21 financial year. This compares to 3,693 apprenticeships generated in 2019-20, representing a 15 percent decrease. Boroughs directly employed 1,505 apprentices, a 15 percent reduction on the previous year, although the reduction in new apprentices employed by the council (as opposed to existing staff starting apprenticeships) was 48 percent. 471 apprentices were delivered in maintained schools, an 8 percent drop on the previous year.

This year's data reveals an acceleration of a significant trend from recent years: the year-on-year reduction in apprenticeship starts at Level 2, in people under the age of 25 taking apprenticeships and in the proportion of apprenticeships being taken by new members of staff. Since 2017/18, the number of Level 2 apprenticeship starts has fallen by 80 percent and the number of apprentices aged 16-18 has fallen by 72 percent.

Conversely, there continues to be an increase in higher level apprenticeships, apprentices aged 25 and over and the number of existing staff members starting apprenticeships. 71 percent of

apprenticeships are now taken by existing staff, and 74 percent are aged 25 and above.

Recommendations That the group:

1. notes the emerging trends outlined in the analysis.
2. comments on additional ways to use the data.
3. considers what, if any, actions should be taken as a result of this year's data.

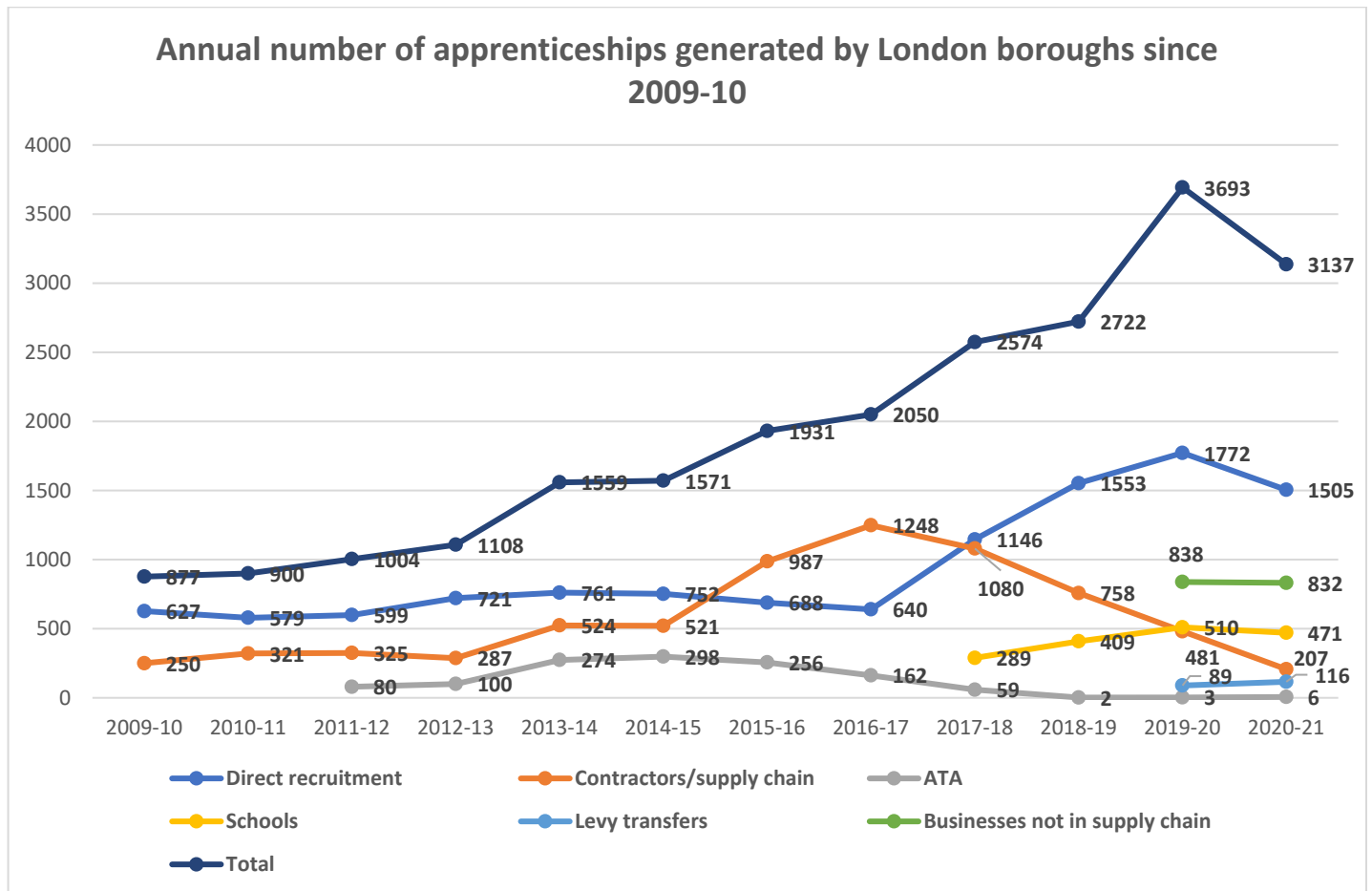
1. Background

- 1.1 Every year London Councils collects data from all London boroughs on:
 - The number of apprentices directly employed by boroughs; including how many of these apprentices are newly recruited to the council, and how many are existing members of staff
 - The number of apprentices employed by maintained schools
 - The number of apprentices recruited by contractors that deliver services on behalf of a borough
 - The number of apprentices placed with ATAs where boroughs pay the salary and provide the placements for but do not employ the apprentice
 - For those apprentices employed directly by the borough and in schools, we also record information on the age, ethnicity, level of apprenticeship, the number of apprentices who were previously NEET and the number who have declared a disability.
- 1.2 This year London Councils asked for data relating to completions and progression for the first time.
- 1.3 Boroughs were asked to submit data on the amount of apprenticeship levy available to them and the amount they were able to spend. This data was previously collected alongside the pay scales data in the autumn.
- 1.4 Boroughs were asked to submit data on organisational headcount, including in maintained schools. This enables the monitoring of achievement against the public sector target.
- 1.5 This year's data collection was carried out in April-May 2020. London Councils received responses from all 32 boroughs and the City of London Corporation.

2 Trends

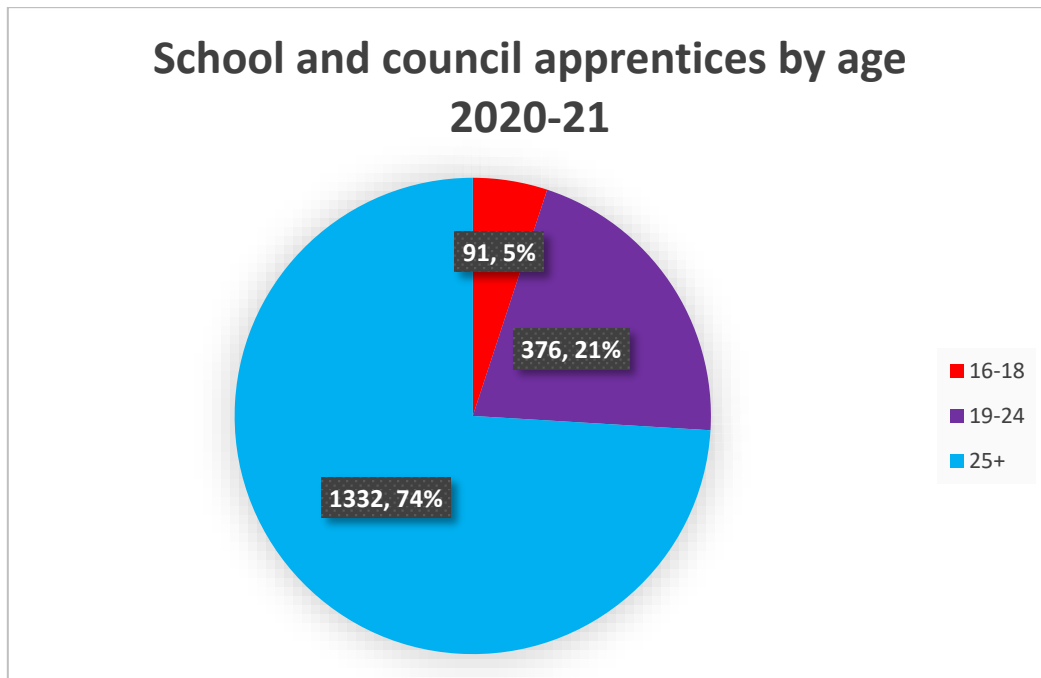
- 2.1 The data submitted shows that **London boroughs generated a total of 3,137 apprenticeships during the 2020-21 financial year**, compared to 3,693 in 2019-20. This represents a 15 percent fall on the previous year.
- 2.2 **Boroughs directly employed 1,505 apprentices, a 15 percent drop on the previous year when they employed 1,772 apprentices.** However, this is still a historically high number for London boroughs. In 2017-18, the year that the apprenticeship levy was introduced, 1,146 apprenticeships were created internally.

- 2.3 **471 apprentices were delivered in maintained schools, an 8 percent fall on the previous year.** Again, this still represents an increase on the years before 2019-20. 289 apprenticeships were created in schools in 2017-18.

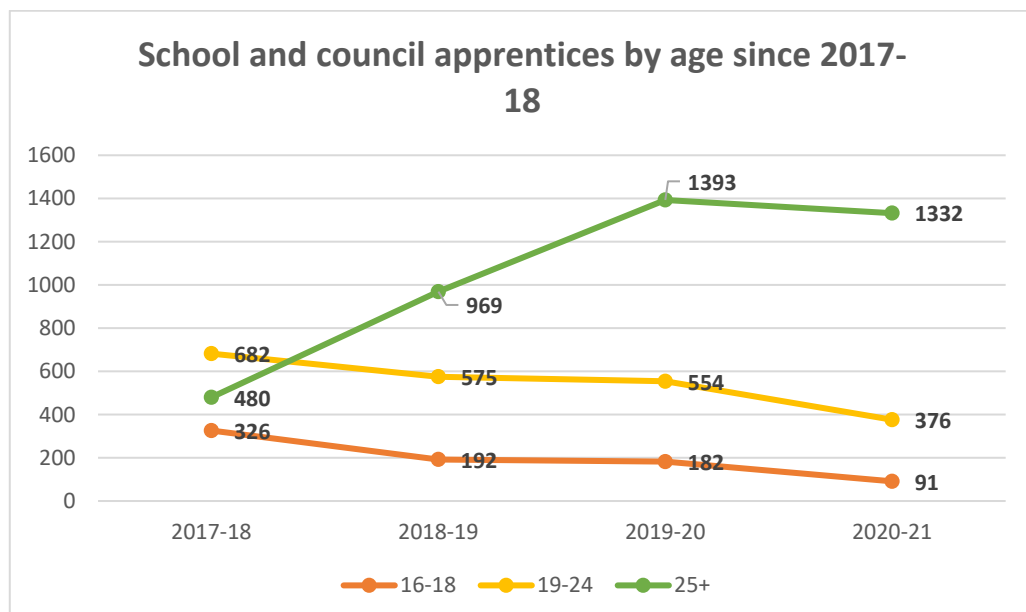


- 2.4 **The number of apprenticeships created through contractors or in the supply chain has declined by 57 percent, from 481 to 207.**
- 2.5 There was hardly any decline in the number of apprenticeships created through working with local businesses not in the supply chain (832 compared to 838 in 2019/20). However, a large proportion of these (74 percent) were generated by a single borough, Southwark.
- 2.6 **Only six apprentices were employed through an ATA,** and all of these starts were reported by a single borough.
- 2.7 **A total of 116 apprenticeships were generated through apprenticeship levy transfers from 12 different boroughs.** This is a 30 percent rise on last year's figures and shows that more boroughs are making use of the apprenticeship levy transfer system. However, it is not a practice that is currently widespread among boroughs.

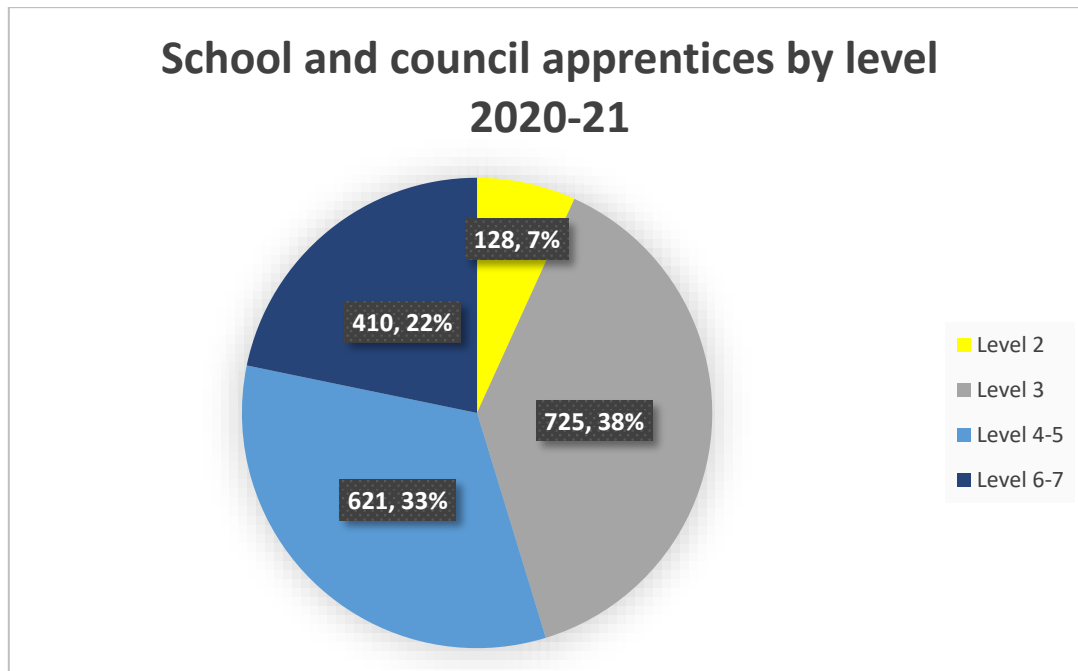
- 2.8 The age of apprentices recruited within the council and in schools was reported in 91 percent of cases. The breakdown by age is as follows:



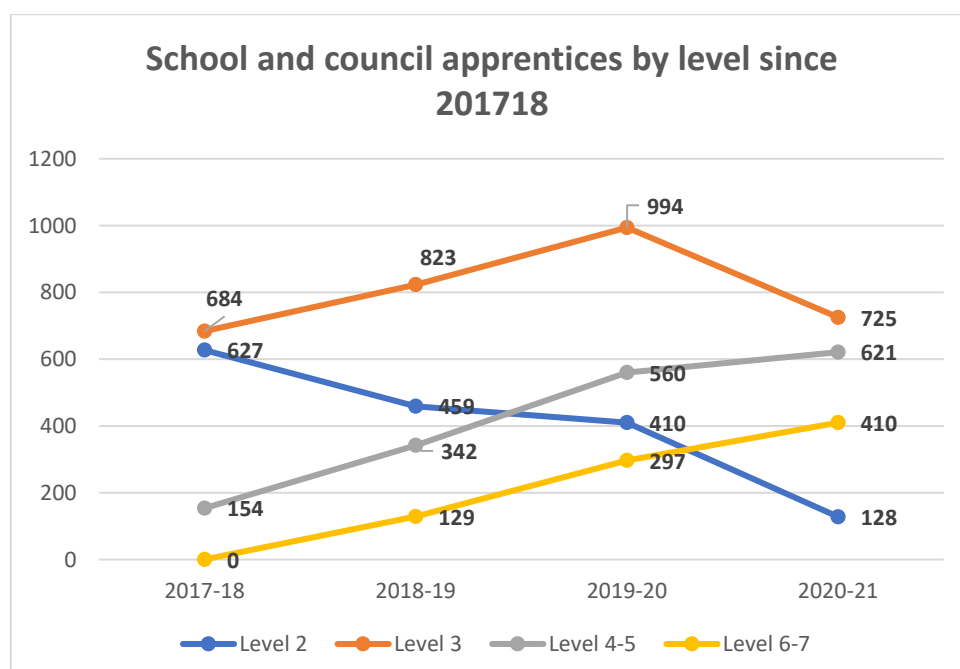
- 2.9 The age data shows a continuation of the trend recorded in recent years of increasing numbers of apprentices aged 25 and over and a reduction in apprentices under the age of 25. **Since 2017-18 (the first year of the apprenticeship levy), the absolute number of apprentices in councils and schools aged 16-18 has fallen by 72 percent and the number aged 19-24 has decreased by 45 percent. In contrast, the number of apprentices aged 25 and over has increased by 178 percent.**



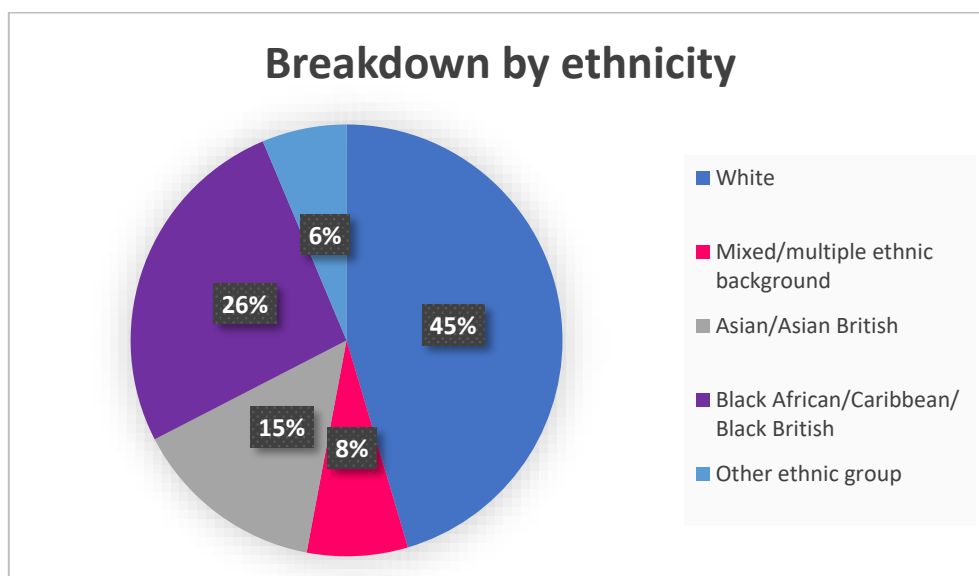
- 2.10 Data on the level of study tells a similar story. This data was provided for around 95 percent of apprentices in councils and schools. The number reported at each level is as follows:



- 2.11 **Since 2017-18 the number of Level 2 apprenticeship starts has fallen by 80 percent, from 627 starts to 128.** This reflects a year-on-year trend, although the fall has been particularly steep this year. **The number of Level 3 starts has undergone the least change, although fell by 27 percent to 725 from last year's figure of 994.**
- 2.12 **The number of Level 4-5 starts has more than quadrupled since 2017-18, increasing from 154 to 621. The number of Level 6-7 starts has risen from zero in 2017-18 to 410 in 2020-21.**

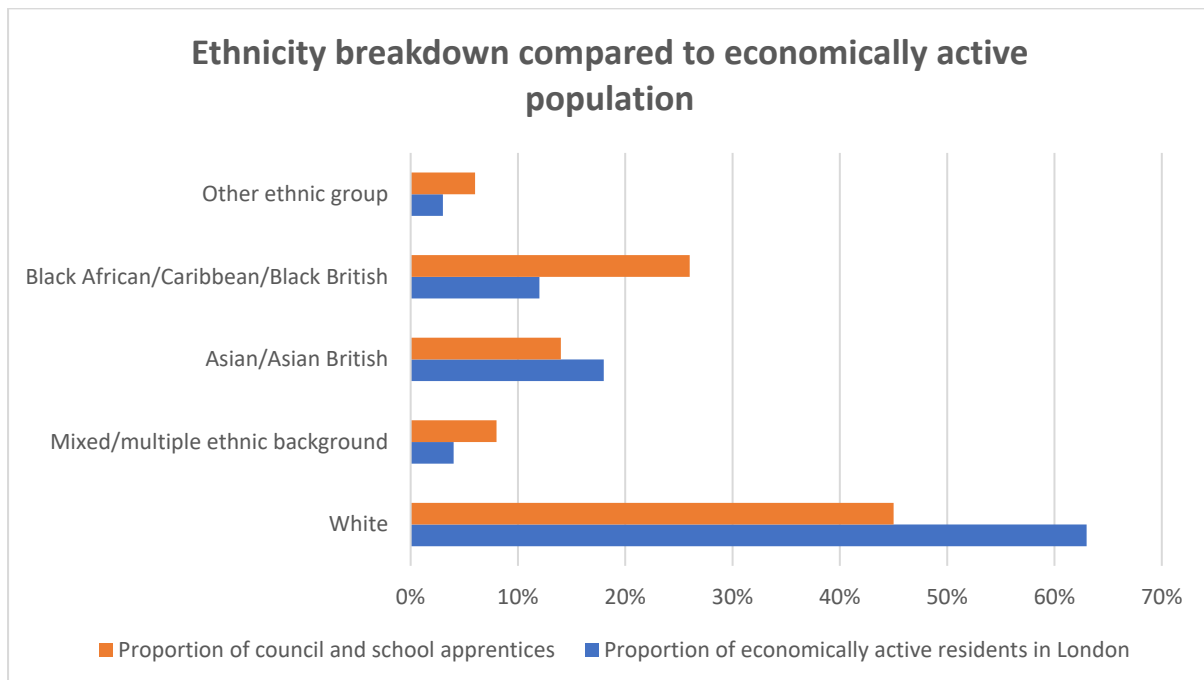


- 2.13 Boroughs provided data on the number of apprenticeship starts for new staff and existing employees in the council. **29 percent of apprenticeship starts were new members of staff, compared to 71 percent who were existing members of staff taking apprenticeships. Last year the respective figures were 45 percent and 55 percent.** The overall fall in starts within councils can be explained by a reduction in new apprentices. This figure almost halved (from 808 to 418), whereas the number of existing staff taking apprenticeships actually increased (from 955 to 1014).
- 2.14 **49 apprentices employed directly within the council were recorded as previously being NEET.** This represents a fall from 182 in 2019-20. Just 9 boroughs were able to report NEET data this year.
- 2.15 **64 percent of apprentices employed in the council or in schools were female, while 36 percent were male.** The respective figures last year were 59 percent and 41 percent.
- 2.16 This is the second year that London Councils has asked for data on ethnicity in relation to apprentices in the council and in schools. Not all boroughs were able to supply data on ethnicity, and some were only able to supply partial data. In total, ethnicity was provided for 62 percent of apprentices directly employed by boroughs and by schools. This broke down as follows, with the ethnic make-up of London's economically active population from the 2011 census in brackets:
- White: **559, 45 percent** (London-wide 63 percent)
 - Mixed/multiple ethnic background: **93, 8 percent** (London-wide 4 percent)
 - Asian/Asian British: **178, 14 percent** (London-wide 18 percent)
 - Black African/Caribbean/Black British: **323, 26 percent** (London-wide 12 percent)
 - Other ethnic group: **78, 6 percent** (London-wide 3 percent)



- 2.17 The proportion of apprentices classed as White or Asian/British is lower than the London-wide figure for the economically active, and higher for those classed as

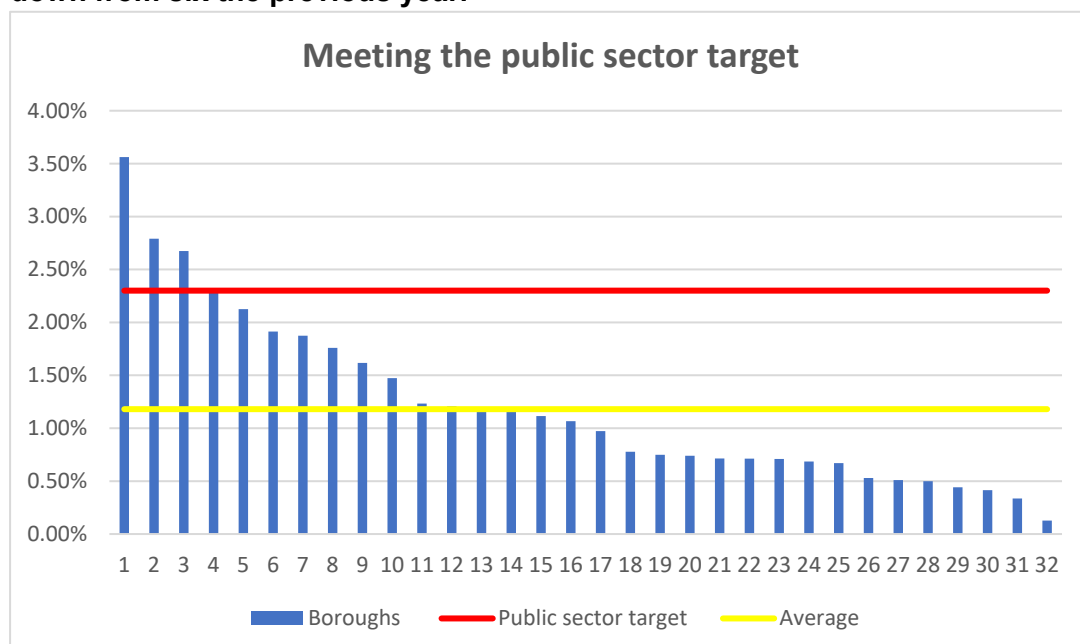
Mixed/multiple ethnic background, Black African/Caribbean/Black British and Other ethnic group.



- 2.18 **84 apprentices, or 4 percent of the total number of apprentices delivered directly by boroughs and in schools, reported having a disability.** This compares to 7 percent of London's economically active population from the 2011 census.

3. Meeting the Public Sector Apprenticeship Target

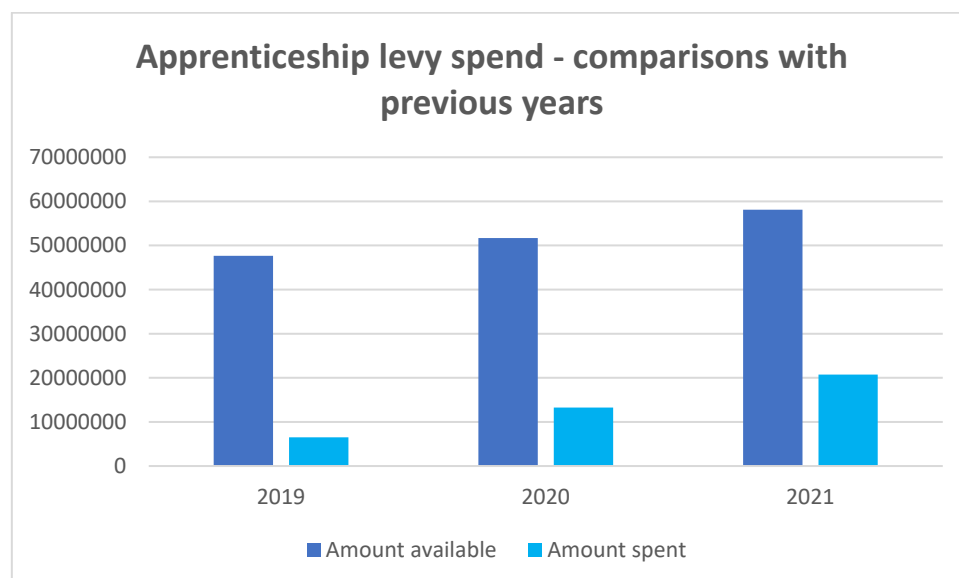
- 3.1 The Public Sector Apprenticeship Target came into force from April 2017. Local authorities must have regard to the target of creating new apprenticeship starts equivalent to at least 2.3% of their staff.
- 3.2 **Four local authorities were able to meet or exceed the 2.3% target in 2020-21, down from six the previous year.**



- 3.3 Headcount data is based on a combination of council headcount and schools where the local authority is the employer (community, voluntary-controlled, community special and maintained nursery schools) on 31 March 2020. This year, boroughs were asked to submit this data themselves.
- 3.4 Significant variance in headcount can be explained by the makeup of schools locally. For example, academies, voluntary-aided and independent schools are not subject to the borough's apprenticeship levy. The makeup of local schools has a significant impact upon boroughs' overall headcount and therefore their ability to meet the public sector target.
- 3.5 Collectively, London boroughs would have needed to create an additional 1,883 apprenticeships to meet the public sector target. **The average performance against the target was an average of 1.18% compared to 1.41% the year before.**

4. Apprenticeship levy

- 4.1 London Councils first surveyed boroughs on their use of the apprenticeship levy in 2019. This is the third year that we have asked about the levy. In previous years it was carried out in conjunction with the pay scales survey in the autumn.
- 4.2 Boroughs were asked two questions about their use of the apprenticeship levy between April 2019 and March 2021: how much levy was available to them; and how much was spent during that time period.
- 4.3 A total of **£58,100,387** in levy funds was available to boroughs in between April 2019 and March 2021, of which **£20,747,260** was spent. **This means that boroughs managed to spend 36 percent of their available apprenticeship levy in between April 2019 and March 2021.**
- 4.4 Although there is still a significant underspend of the apprenticeship levy, this represents an increase on previous years. Last year's survey found that boroughs spent 26 percent of their levy and in the year before that the figure was just 13 percent.



5. Completion and progression

- 5.1 This year, for the first time, London Councils collected data around apprenticeship completions and progression. We asked for the number of apprenticeship completions, both for new apprentices and existing staff taking apprenticeships. For all of these completions we asked how many went on to a new job within the council; a job outside the council; another apprenticeship within the council; an apprenticeship outside the council; or further or higher education.
- 5.2 Boroughs reported having 404 completions of new apprentices and 175 completions of existing staff taking apprenticeships. These figures are considerably lower than the number of annual starts, which suggests that this data is not consistently kept on record or isn't easily accessible.
- 5.3 **Of the 404 completions of apprentices who were new to the council, 219 (54 percent) went on to a job in the council, 47 (12 percent) started another apprenticeship, 62 (15 percent) moved to a job outside the council, 5 (1 percent) secured an apprenticeship outside the council and 3 (1 percent) went on to further or higher education.** No destination was given for 68 (17 percent) of these completions.
- 5.4 Of the 175 completions of existing members of staff, 12 (7 percent) went on to a new job in the council and 3 (2 percent) went on to another apprenticeship. This data was provided by a limited number of boroughs. It is assumed the other existing staff members who completed an apprenticeship remained in their previous role.

Apprenticeship completions: 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021			
New apprentices (internal, not including schools)		Existing staff taking apprenticeships	
Number of completions	404		175
Of those completions, how many went on to a new job in the council?	219		12
Of those completions, how many went on to another apprenticeship in the council?	47		3
Of those completions, how many went on to a job outside the council?	62		
Of those completions, how many went on to another apprenticeship outside the council?	5		
Of those completions, how many went on to Further or Higher Education?	3		

6. Next steps for the data

- 6.1 It is intended that the data will be used in the following ways:
- In a letter to other Chief Executives to update on trends in apprenticeships across London.

- In a presentation to the Greater London Employers Forum (GLEF) meeting in July 2021.
- On London Councils' apprenticeship web pages.
- In correspondence with government to lobby for greater flexibility in using the apprenticeship levy and further devolution of skills policy.
- Aggregate numbers will be used to inform conversations with other organisations without a commercial interest in apprenticeships to approach joint lobbying positions on behalf of London local government.
- Aggregate numbers may also be used in the media to support London Councils' public positions. Individual borough data will not be disclosed without prior permission from the borough in question, though this data would be disclosed if subject to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

7. Points for discussion

- 7.1 All of the data contained in this report relates to a period when we were going through the Covid-19 pandemic. For much of this period the economy was partly locked down, local authorities were dealing with the impact of the pandemic and home working was enforced. It is therefore unsurprising that the data reveals a reduction in apprenticeship starts. In this context it is impressive that the overall reduction was modest and that councils continued to generate apprenticeships.
- 7.2 However, the fall in the number of young people taking apprenticeships in boroughs is concerning, particularly in the context of the pandemic and the impact this has had on youth unemployment and education. Only 26 percent of apprentices were under the age of 25 and just 29 percent were new members of the workforce. It may be that the unique circumstances of the previous 12 months were the main reason for such low figures, however it continues a trend that dates back to the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and the replacement of frameworks with standards.
- 7.3 It would be useful to discuss the causes of this trend with the apprenticeship sub-group. It is likely that the withdrawal of frameworks has meant that there are fewer apprenticeship opportunities available for young people entering the workforce, particularly at Level 2. Meanwhile, the growth in higher level standards accompanied by the availability of the levy, has led to a year-on-year increase in the number of existing staff members taking apprenticeships at higher levels. This in itself is not a bad thing, but it is concerning if it is coming at the expense of younger apprentices entering the workforce. What can boroughs do to change this? And what changes are needed to the national policy framework?
- 7.4 Research carried out by Volterra Partners for London Councils forecasts that London's youth unemployment rate (16-24 year olds) across London could hit 31.9% by the end of 2021 (core scenario). Apprenticeships will have a vital role to play in providing pathways into work for young people and alleviating the risk of long-term scarring. How can boroughs ensure that they are helping to create these apprenticeship opportunities for young people?
- 7.5 There was a reduction in the number of apprentices previously classed as NEET and a reduction in the number of boroughs reporting NEET data. What can be done to ensure that more boroughs are able to record and access this data on whether apprentices are formerly NEET?

- 7.6 The number of apprentices reported in the supply chain continues to fall. While the circumstances of the pandemic can at least partly explain this, it should be noted that the employer incentives have been in place for much of the period in question. It would be interesting to hear the views on the group on these employer incentives and whether they have made a difference. In previous years, capacity issues in boroughs have prevented monitoring whether targets have been met in the supply chain. Is this still the case?
- 7.7 London Councils is in the process of submitting a paper to government calling for reforms to the apprenticeship levy, which we have put together jointly with the GLA, the subregions and London business organisations. The paper calls for a number of flexibilities to be introduced to the levy, which would free up some of this funding to be spent on things like wages and pre-apprenticeship training. It would be interesting to hear the views of members of the group about these proposals, and whether you feel they could lead to an increase in starts, particularly for younger people.
- 7.8 The proportion of the apprenticeship levy spent by boroughs has increased to 36 percent, compared to just 13 percent two years ago. This is a positive development. The growth in the number of higher level apprenticeships with higher funding bands is likely to be a major cause of this increase.
- 7.9 This is the first year that we have collected data on completions and progression. The data submitted is useful, for example showing that 54 percent of new apprentices went on to jobs in the council. However, not all boroughs were able to submit this data and most boroughs only returned partial data, particularly in relation to existing members of staff. No data was provided for 17 percent of completions relating to new apprentices, and it is unclear whether this is due to the data being unavailable or negative outcomes (we will review the options we provide for these questions next year). It would be useful to find out why this data is not widely available and what can be done to ensure that more boroughs are able to provide it in future years.