



THE EVALUATION OF  
THE **CORNWALL  
& ISLES OF SCILLY  
APPRENTICESHIP  
CAMPAIGN**  
APRIL 2020



European Union  
European Social Fund  
Investing in jobs and skills

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 Evaluation of the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Apprenticeship Campaign
 

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report of the evaluation of the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (CloS) Apprenticeship Campaign by Kada Research Limited. This summary sets the scene, assesses the activities funded as part of the Campaign, highlights key lessons from elsewhere and concludes with some recommendations for the future.

## CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

The Campaign was established by a partnership between the CloS Growth/Skills Hub, Cornwall Council's Economic Growth Service, and CloS Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It provides information and support to local companies about Apprenticeships. Its aim is to increase Apprenticeship starts and boost workforce skills. The new Campaign started in May 2019 and sought to address outdated perceptions of Apprenticeships which could act as potential barriers to engagement. The Campaign included digital marketing via a refreshed website and various social media channels, a telemarketing exercise that reached out to businesses and the development of an employer toolkit.

## APPROACH AND STRUCTURE

This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods including discussions with stakeholders. The first Chapter reviews the strategic and operational backdrop for delivery and describes key elements of the Campaign. Chapter 2.0 reviews marketing statistics and analytical intelligence including Apprenticeship take up. Discussions with intermediaries, delivery staff, contractors and businesses were held, focusing on the quality, pitch and effectiveness of Campaign (see Campaign Delivery and Impact, Chapter 4.0). A brief analysis of good practice from elsewhere appears in Chapter 3.0.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The changing context is important as it shapes the delivery and content of the Campaign which responds to changing employer requirements. This is covered in some detail in Section 1.5 of the report.

There have been many policy changes to the make-up of, and support for, Apprenticeships. By August 2020, all Apprenticeship starts will be under the new Apprenticeship standards, as frameworks are progressively phased out and withdrawn.

The wider UK context is covered in the report (Section 1.5). It describes why there has been so much policy emphasis on Apprenticeships as a means of developing employer skills. UK productivity is 20% below the rest of the G7 nations, ranking in the bottom four OECD countries for literacy and numeracy skills amongst 16 to 24 year olds, resulting in a recognised skills shortage. The link between the UK's skills shortage and low productivity remains a primary challenge to economic growth and raising living standards and has been a key focus of Government policy for some years. With an estimated return on taxpayers' investment at £26–28 for every £1 invested in Apprenticeships (level 2 and 3) the attention on



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Apprenticeships is perhaps understandable. This has been accompanied by changes to the Apprenticeship system and wider economic influences.

The most recent influence has been the global Coronavirus outbreak in early 2020 which has an immediate impact on the experience of Apprentices. The Department for Education (DfE)/Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have published clear guidance to support those affected with a desire to continue to complete Apprenticeships wherever possible. This could mean utilising digital or distance learning tools, re-scheduling assessments and/or initiating a formal break. Training providers are worried about the survival of their businesses which places increased risks on the viability supporting some Apprenticeships.

The CloS LEP Employment Skills Strategy (2016-2030) has Strategic Objectives (SOs) to 'enable people to learn about career pathways and be equipped for the world of work'. There is an action for the Apprenticeship Steering Group to develop the website and co-ordinate the CloS Apprenticeship offer, specifically for employers. Under this SO there was an ambition to develop higher and degree level Apprenticeships, evaluate the impact of funding changes on SME engagement and identify the priority Apprentice standards/frameworks for further development to best meet the economic growth needs of CloS. There was a desire to promote the value of Apprenticeships and vocational routeways and raise awareness of Apprenticeships as a progression route for all workers.

Cornwall's Devolution Deal (July 2015) has an employment and skills component that focuses on increasing the number of people with higher level skills, combating underemployment and supporting those furthest from the labour market to get the skills and experience needed to find work. Agreed actions included improving Apprenticeship brokerage activities for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

## PERFORMANCE

Chapter 2.0 of the report looks at the performance of the Campaign in terms of marketing, engagement and the number of Apprenticeship starts.

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### TELEMARKETING

There were some illuminating findings from the telemarketing Campaign which generated useful intelligence on employer intentions, but more limited tangible leads. Over one in five businesses were contacted for the survey (22%, 5279 of the 24,255 businesses registered in 2019). It therefore provides an accurate snapshot of business intentions and awareness (note the survey was conducted pre-Coronavirus in 2019). The telemarketing Campaign headlines found:

- Just under a third of businesses (30%) were aware of the CloS Growth/Skills Hub.
- Around a fifth (21%) were struggling to recruit employees and over half (54%) would like to upskill or increase their workforce.
- 14% of businesses had an Apprentice. 20% had employed one within the last few years. Most (70%) found it a positive experience.
- 82%, 55% and only 24% of respondents were aware that Apprenticeships were available for school and college leavers, university graduates and part-time or seasonal workers respectively.

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- Just over a third (35%) of businesses who needed to expand their workforce researched whether government subsidised Apprenticeships would be suitable. 22% of respondents cited an awareness of the Cornwall Apprenticeship Training Agency.
- Of the 5,279 employers contacted 334 contacts (6.3%) requested further information, 34 businesses (0.6%) asked the Skills Hub to get in touch, 263 (5%) were added to email bulletins and 51 (1%) received information via post.

The following table extrapolated the headline responses to the 2019 Cornish Business population. Looking at awareness, when extrapolated, as many as 7,300 businesses had heard of the Growth/Skills Hub, so penetration levels are quite good at 30%, though there is still a cohort of some 17,000 who have not heard of the Growth/Skills Hub. There are an estimated 1,800 who would like to upskill their workforce who have considered an Apprentice. At the time of the survey there were some 5,100 businesses struggling to recruit. Looking at awareness, there are some 10,900 firms (extrapolated) who didn't realise you could use graduates for Apprenticeships and 18,400 who didn't know that Apprenticeships were available for part time or seasonal work. These could be possible future Campaign themes.

### Extrapolation of Telemarketing Intelligence

|  | %    | Number |
|--|------|--------|
| Total Number of Businesses                             | 100% | 24,255 |
| Sample interviewed                                     | 22%  | 5,279  |
| Awareness of the Growth/Skills Hub                     | 30%  | 7,277  |
| Struggling to Recruit                                  | 21%  | 5,094  |
| Number of above who have considered an Apprentice      | 35%  | 1,783  |
| Would like to upskill or increase their workforce      | 54%  | 13,098 |
| Aware that could use school leavers                    | 82%  | 19,889 |
| Aware that could use graduates                         | 55%  | 13,340 |
| Aware that available for part-time or seasonal workers | 24%  | 5,821  |

Source: Pfa Research, Kada Research, ONS 2019

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Cornwall Apprenticeships website was updated as part of the PR Campaign. An analysis of web traffic (May 2019 to November 2019) compared to the same period in the previous year (2018) shows that:

- 6,637 users reached the site during the 2019 period including 6,398 new users (98%), a small decline of 8.8% in comparison to 2018.
- There was a 13.6% improvement in the average session duration of website visitors.
- There was a noticeable decrease in the bounce rate by 23.1% which moved from an average typical rating to excellent during the Campaign period showing that users are engaging with the website more. Data on the number of pages viewed per session supports this.
- Whilst the number of users and new users decreased (2019), website user engagement increased.

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- The top four pages were the homepage (8,018 views), 'finding an Apprenticeship' (6,584 views), 'local training providers' (635 views), and 'how to hire an Apprentice' (325 views). This suggests there are many more individuals accessing the site to find an Apprenticeship compared to employers. You would expect the number of individuals to be higher, but you might have expected a higher employer penetration rate (see recommendations).
- 58.7% of website users are female and 41.3% are male. This is encouraging given the number of male Apprenticeship starts is 54% and shows it a good platform to access females interested in Apprenticeships.
- Over 25% of users fall within the 25-34 age range, followed by the 45-54 range (22.5%).
- The PR Campaign received the most traction on Facebook, with 3,621 engagements and 878 post link clicks. Twitter published the most posts (293) and Facebook the most videos (23). From November 2019 onwards, all social media metrics show a decrease, possibly correlating to the end of the paid for social media promotion.

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### APPRENTICESHIP STARTS

CloS Apprenticeship starts increased by 6.3% from 3,990 in 2017/18 to 4,242 the following year, 1.6% higher than the 4.7% national increase. There has been an increase in Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship starts nationally and in CloS though the number of Intermediate Apprenticeship starts has decreased in both geographies. CloS Higher Apprenticeship starts increased by 34.2% to 494, lower than the 55.9% growth nationally partly reflecting the availability of provision. Advanced Apprenticeships have increased at a rate 2.7 times the national average, 14.0% compared to 5.1%.

### LESSONS FROM ELSEWHERE

Chapter 3.0 highlights key lessons from elsewhere. These include:

- Having a clear slogan can help create, deepen and add resonance to the Apprenticeship support agenda, maximising social media posts and galvanising partners.
- A roadmap or simple action plan to help demonstrate the steps a business needs to take.
- Clear intelligence and FAQs to inform businesses and individuals including 'myth busters'.
- Case studies to get the message across, notably using videos recorded by businesses and individuals. The diversity of potential Apprenticeships can be showcased, for instance, older workers or graduates.
- More innovative approaches include podcasts and curated content such as blogs, TV adverts, YouTube recordings or video diaries.
- Interactive tools such as flow charts can be used to engage viewers on the website and provide information in a different format. Vacancies can be organised by sector or presented in an enticing way. Websites can be highly interactive allowing employers to upload vacancies.
- Presenting providers in an engaging way for employers and graduates.
- Social media Campaigns e.g. competitions and events to increase awareness and drive traffic to websites.
- Keeping interested parties up to date in relation to the fallout from the Coronavirus including changes to the programmes, collation of intelligence and resources and FAQs.

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### SCHEME DELIVERY

Chapter 4.0 of the report notes that a key motivation for the Campaign was to dispel common misconceptions surrounding Apprenticeships, for instance showing that Apprenticeships are suitable for people of any age. With only 14% of business surveyed having an Apprentice at the time of the survey, stakeholders acknowledged the continued importance of raising awareness of the availability of Apprenticeships in CloS. For those already aware of Apprenticeships, stakeholders wanted to increase available information access via a clear but multi-dimensional Campaign.

Boosting awareness contributes to the national and local policy objectives to increase the number of Apprenticeships starts and support business growth. Businesses looking to grow or consider an Apprentice welcomed the impartial advice they received. Key barriers mentioned included timing, capacity and transport. Transport was a particular concern locally but not an insurmountable one for some. For smaller SMEs the 5% contribution may be a deterrent.

The refreshed website and logo for the Apprenticeships Campaign was completed quickly, well received and locally distinctive. The fact the Campaign was linked to skills officers and Skills Navigators who could offer tailored advice was welcomed. A high quality social media Campaign has improved the reach and understanding of Apprenticeships. There is scope to build on this profile raising activity undertaken. Stakeholders were very pleased with case study videos and there is appetite for more of these and perhaps some more sector related examples. Not all elements of Campaign activity worked as well for instance the #AddaSpark Campaign did not achieve the results hoped for.

The telemarketing findings provided useful insights on employer intentions and awareness (see earlier) that informed the work of the Skills Hub and Navigators. However it did absorb a large proportion of the budget (36%) partly reflecting the very large sample size. Stakeholders thought it was perhaps less successful on lead generation where the strike rates were comparatively low and feedback from the advisors suggests the quality of intelligence and leads generated was variable.

The Campaign has a useful signposting and referral function. The refreshed website has improved the accessibility of relevant information and intelligence on Apprenticeships for employers and Apprentices alike. Businesses highlighted that the support had helped them make informed decisions. The impact of the Campaign on Apprenticeship starts is hard to quantify and directly attribute, but the slight recent uptake in Apprenticeship starts is encouraging. There will be a need to scale up advice to support employer recovery and growth after the Coronavirus restrictions subside.

There was a desire for more frequent internal communication about the performance of different aspects of the Campaign. PR and marketing activity could be extended with a clear message to help overcome the local challenges that Apprenticeships face. Different sectors and types of Apprenticeship could be promoted, existing workers or Higher Apprenticeships for example. Direct communication with businesses interested in Apprenticeships should be maintained. There is an aspiration to build on the momentum gained during the Campaign.



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### CONCLUSION

Given the relatively limited budget (£50,000), the Cornwall Apprenticeship Campaign has performed well. The quality of the website has improved immeasurably and interaction with the site has deepened. Some elements did not work as well as anticipated such as the #AddaSpark Campaign but others such as the videos have exceeded expectations. Apprenticeship starts are steadily increasing, as is the take up of Advanced Apprentices which has increased at a rate 2.7 times the national average. Intelligence about employer intentions has been gathered but more limited tangible leads generated through telemarketing.

There has been much work behind the scenes with partners that could be deepened. There is now an urgent need to respond to the effects of the Coronavirus outbreak on the experience of Apprentices and employers. The next iteration of the Campaign needs to build on the successes achieved through social media and other activity, continue to innovate in its dissemination of Apprenticeship intelligence on policy and practice, and respond clearly and robustly to changing employer needs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The team may wish to consider the following recommendations for a Phase 2 of the Campaign:

- I. Seeking proposals to enhance the functionality of the website in light of good practice from elsewhere. Suggestions, which have been informed by observation from the web designer and good practice from elsewhere, include:
  - a. Online chat to offer immediate support and/or direction.
  - b. Apprenticeship filtering allowing Apprentices looking for key sectors to find them easily.
  - c. The employers and Apprentice section could each have an overview page with the home page split screen linking directly to these, rather than through scrolling. This could list various pages in a clean, simple format making it easier to find the required information.
  - d. Data capture, a pop up could display to entice potential Apprentices or employers to provide their email address to receive further information. The data gathered could include a preferred sector to enable segmentation allowing for targeted email Campaigns.
  - e. Greater opportunities for employer engagement and improved employer and vacancy sections.
  - f. Further content optimisation measures for instance specific sections on key sectors.
- II. Building on the traction gained in social media activity.
- III. Developing a new SME Apprenticeship levy funded skills pot to stimulate and accelerate SME starts.
- IV. Developing more innovative curated content building on the success of the videos. More innovative approaches include podcasts, blogs, TV adverts, YouTube recordings or video diaries. These could showcase the diversity of potential Apprenticeships for instance older workers or graduates.
- V. Encouraging more employers to visit the website.
- VI. Using the Proud to Care model to promote Apprenticeships in other sectors such as the Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies and Leisure, Travel and Tourism which are well represented and less well represented respectively in terms of Apprenticeship starts.

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- VII. Taking measures to enhance female participation in Apprenticeships (Ambassadors for instance).
- VIII. Running social media Campaigns e.g. competitions and events to increase awareness and drive traffic to the website. These could focus on the estimated 5,100 businesses struggling to recruit, the 10,900 firms who didn't realise you could use graduates and 18,400 who didn't know that Apprenticeships were available for part time or seasonal work.
- IX. Developing a new slogan to promote the Cornish Apprenticeship support agenda, maximising social media postings and galvanising partners.
- X. Commission think pieces from leading figures on subjects of interest. These could take the form of written articles, podcasts or Q&A sessions.

There are also some special measures in light of Coronavirus that could be considered:

- I. Keeping interested parties up to date in relation to the fallout from the virus including changes to Apprenticeships and useful resources and FAQs.
- II. Continuing to provide information that would have been provided at events and conferences through other platforms such as virtual conferences and online videos. Perhaps hosting seminars and events that advise stakeholders on current events and Q&A.
- III. Collating and disseminating intelligence about the effects of the pandemic on key sectors through appropriate forms such as virtual presentations, social media, written reports, videos.
- IV. Providing guidance on relevant support for all stakeholders e.g. to help Apprentices with online study, help businesses and training providers with financial support/signposting to advisory services.
- V. Developing case studies, video diaries and blogs of how employers have managed to retain their Apprenticeships through the current crisis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND CAMPAIGN CONTEXT

This is an evaluation of the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (CloS) Apprenticeship Campaign. This chapter summarises the key activities and its aims and objectives. It concludes with a review of the approach to evaluation and strategic context.

### 1.1. WHAT WAS THE CAMPAIGN SEEKING TO DO?

The Cornwall Apprenticeships Campaign and associated website were designed to develop a resource package directed at SME employers and individuals within CloS. The Campaign is a partnership between the CloS Hub, Cornwall Council's Economic Growth Service, and the CloS Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Campaign sought to provide information about the benefits of Apprenticeships with the aim of increasing Apprenticeship uptake and boosting workforce skills. It was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) Innovation Fund under Priority Axis 2.2 of the European Structural and Investment Framework (ESIF) '*improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems*'.

The previous Cornwall Apprenticeships Campaign took place during 2013-15, since then Apprenticeship policy and delivery have significantly changed, with a subsequent dip the slight recovery in numbers of Apprenticeship starts at a national and local level as a result. This Campaign began in May 2019. It sought to address outdated perceptions of Apprenticeships, which were perceived as a key barriers to employer and individual engagement and enhance workforce skills within CloS. The Campaign was multi-dimensional and delivered via a refreshed Cornwall Apprenticeships website, social media activity (see Chapter Two), telemarketing, toolkits, events and the recruitment of ambassadors. Case studies were also used to highlight the benefits of Apprenticeships for businesses.

### 1.2. CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

The Campaign objectives, which were quite ambitious, included:

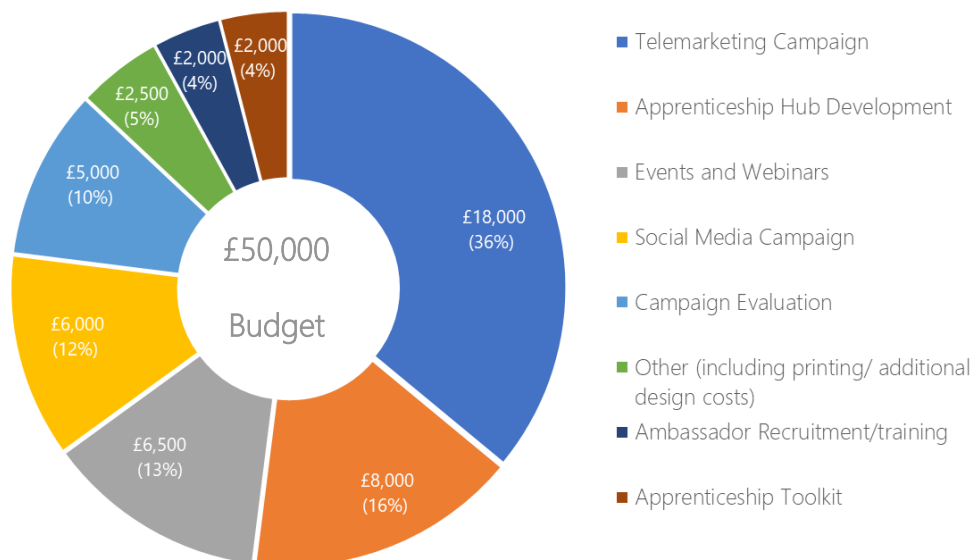
- Increasing awareness of the benefits and features of Apprenticeships, ensuring employers are aware of recent changes and could benefit from the changes to policy and funding.
- Increasing the number of 'new' employers recruiting Apprentices.
- Re-engaging employers and encouraging employers who've previously engaged to re-engage or take on more Apprentices in new areas of their business.
- Encouraging workforce development, helping employers to understand how Apprenticeship training works for existing staff and equipping them to 'sell' Apprenticeships to staff.
- Increasing demand and starts for higher and degree level Apprenticeships.
- Equipping business intermediaries to support and raise awareness and interest in Apprenticeships, so they feel more confident in advising and signposting employers.

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- Helping employers decide whether new vacancies could be offered as an Apprenticeship.
- Identifying and recruiting new Apprenticeship Ambassadors from SMEs and develop a 'bank' of new employer case studies.

### 1.3. CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURE

Cornwall Apprenticeships Campaign Expenditure



The Campaign had a budget of £50,000. The chart shows that the targeted telemarketing Campaign, which used LEP employer data to provide 'warm' leads to Business Connectors to follow up, spent over a third of the resource (36%, £18,000). The development of the Apprenticeship Hub website from the 2013-2015 Campaign absorbed 16% of the funds (£8,000). Events and webinars accounted for £6,500, 13% of the budget. The website was designed to be locally appealing with up to date information on Apprenticeships and a clear employer 'call to action'.

The social media Campaign accounted for £6,000 (12%) and this evaluation £5,000 (10%). Other costs included printing and design (5%, £2,500). Ambassador recruitment and training (4%, £2,000) and the Apprenticeship toolkit for intermediaries working with employers (4%, £2,000), made up the final 8%.

### 1.4. EVALUATION APPROACH

The key tasks were as follows:

- A desk review of strategic and operational context and a description of the key elements of the marketing Campaign (see Chapter 1.0).
- A review of marketing statistics and analytical intelligence, in addition to a review of marketing material (the website, supporting information, material etc). (Chapter 2.0).
- Consultations with intermediaries, Campaign delivery staff, ambassadors and contractors and consultations with two businesses (see Appendix 1.0).

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- A review of similar approaches and Campaigns elsewhere (Chapter 3.).
- Recommendations for a potential Phase 2 of the Campaign (See Section 5.0).

## 1.5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND POLICY CHANGES

### INTRODUCTION TO APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships provide practical training within employment combined with study towards a qualification. They take one to four years to complete depending on the level (illustrated).

#### Apprenticeship Types

| Name         | Level       | Equivalent education level      | Returns over working life |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Intermediate | 2           | 5 GCSE passes at grades A* to C | £48,000 - £74,000         |
| Advanced     | 3           | 2 A-level passes                | £77,000 - £117,000        |
| Higher       | 4, 5, 6 & 7 | Foundation degree above         | £150,000+                 |
| Degree       | 6 & 7       | Bachelors or master degree      | £150,000+                 |

Source: English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision, HM Government. Released 2015. Pg. 3. Accessed [here](#).

There are two types of Apprenticeships: (a) frameworks and (b) standards. By August 2020 all Apprenticeship starts will be under the newer Apprenticeship standards as frameworks are progressively phased out and withdrawn. Apprenticeship standards were formed as a response to the 2012 Richard Review of Apprenticeships and differ from frameworks in that they are developed by industry employers and sector organisations (frameworks were developed only by sectoral representative bodies). Unlike frameworks, standards include an end-point assessment.

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

UK productivity is 20% below the rest of the G7 national, and the UK ranks in the bottom four OECD countries for literacy and numeracy skills amongst 16 to 24 year olds, resulting in a recognised skills shortage. The link between the UK's skills shortage and low productivity remains the major inhibitor to economic growth and raising living standards and is a key focus of Government industrial policy.

The Government's Productivity Plan (2015) outlined a framework for building productivity in the country through two pillars:

- Encouraging long-term investment in economic capital, infrastructure, skills and knowledge.
- Promoting a dynamic economy that encourages innovation and helps resources flow to their most productive use.

With a return on taxpayers' investment estimated at between £26–28 for every £1 invested in Apprenticeships (level 2 and 3) there is an increased focus on Apprenticeships. Under the skills and knowledge part of the productivity plan the shift in emphasis towards Apprenticeships has been accompanied by changes to the Apprenticeship system. Following this plan, the Government committed to an ambitious goal of achieving three million Apprenticeship starts as well as increasing the quality and quantity of Apprenticeships nationally (see English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision paper).



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Following the Enterprise Act 2016, the Institute for Apprenticeships was established, to ensure high quality standards in Apprenticeships are achieved and advise the Government on funding for each standard. The Enterprise Act also provided the Secretary of State power to set targets for Apprenticeships within public bodies. The term 'Apprenticeship' was given the same legal treatment as degrees. The rationale was to elevate the status of Apprenticeships and ensure greater parity of esteem between vocational and academic education.

From May 2017, funding for Apprenticeships changed, with Apprenticeship frameworks and standards being funded in the same way. The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced, marking the most significant funding change. Levy funds are accessed through a digital Apprenticeship service, and funds can be spent on the training and assessment provided to an Apprentice only, and not on internal training or wages.

### Apprenticeship Levy

Introduced in April 2017, the levy is a funding system for Apprenticeships, paid for by UK employers with a pay bill exceeding £3 million per year. The levy is set at 0.5% of the value of the employer's pay bill, minus an Apprenticeship levy allowance provided by the Government of £15,000 per financial year per business. This amount is then paid into an Apprenticeship service account which the business must spend on Apprenticeship training and assessment. Levy paying employers can transfer up to 25% of their levy funds to other employers, helping smaller businesses also invest in more training opportunities. Between 2017/18 it raised £2.7 billion, and between 2019/20 it is expected to raise over £3 billion. Smaller employers who do not pay the levy pay 5% of the cost of training and assessment for Apprenticeships, with the government contributing the remaining 95%.

Several rules surrounding levy funding changed in 2019 to benefit both non-levy paying employers and the larger organisations that do pay the levy. From April 2019, the contribution that non-levy paying employers made towards Apprenticeships was halved from 10% to 5%, offering companies with a payroll below £3m a greater incentive to be involved. Levy paying organisations were also permitted to donate up to 25% of their levy pot towards supporting other SMEs in funding their own Apprentices. This is explored in a CloS context later. Also, if a company has unused levy funds in their account, these monies are to be withdrawn at the end of the financial year, providing further stimulus for accrued levy funds to be used regularly<sup>1</sup>.

Further changes to Apprenticeship funding since August 2018 include an increase in the number of funding bands for which individual Apprenticeships are classified within. These increased from 15 to 30, however the upper limits of the bands (ranging from £15,000 - £27,000) remained the same. The Government also began providing dedicated specialist support for certain Apprentices and their employers. For employers who have fewer than 50 staff members, the Government will cover the costs of all training for Apprentices if they meet the following criteria: a) the Apprentice is aged 16-18, or b) the Apprentice is aged 19-24 and been in care, or has a Local Authority Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). All employers who train Apprentices aged 16 to 18, or Apprentices within the EHCP receive

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<sup>1</sup> <https://theApprenticeacademy.co.uk/blog/changes-to-Apprenticeship-funding-from-april-2019/>

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supplementary payments of £1,000 to help cover additional costs needed to train individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds <sup>2</sup>.

Other skills initiatives have also been introduced including Skills Advisory Panels at LEP level, strategic groups who work with local businesses, public sector organisations, charities and other institutions to inform for skills and strategy development at a sub-regional level. Technical Educational reforms are being phased in too, with new educational courses (T-levels) to be delivered by colleges from 2020/21.

The Industrial Strategy (2017), and Digital Skills Strategy (2017) both also emphasise policy motivations to support sector specific skills training, with the Industrial Strategy announcing a £406 million fund for investment in maths, digital and tech skills, an Adult retraining scheme and Career learning pilots.

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### APPRENTICESHIPS AND CORONAVIRUS

Following the global Coronavirus outbreak in early 2020, the UK Government's response was to implement a social distancing policy, effectively putting the country into a 'lockdown' from late March. All non-essential travel has been limited and the majority of workers across the country (apart from key workers or industries) are now working remotely. This has an immediate impact on the experience of Apprentices, and the Department for Education (DfE)/Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have published clear guidance aimed to continue to support those affected.

The ESFA intend to support Apprentices to continue to complete Apprenticeship training wherever possible. It is expected that they will need to continue to meet the minimum 20% off the job training requirement and are encouraged to utilise digital or distance learning tools where practicable. Apprentices who cannot be assessed will have end-point assessments re-scheduled, and at the time of writing the ESFA would not consider awarding Apprenticeships without this end point assessment.

A temporary measure has been put in place to allow employers and training providers to set in place a formal break (+ 4 weeks) to the Apprenticeship. Previously, only Apprentices were able to enact this. This will enable Apprenticeship stakeholders i.e. the Apprentice, the employer, or the training provider, to make changes more fluidly if required (for example if a stakeholder is unable to provide their service due to illness, demand for Apprentice to be deployed to different role within company, Apprentice furloughed or made redundant etc). If an Apprentice is made redundant, guidance states that training providers must support them in finding another employer as quickly as possible (ideally within 12 weeks) <sup>3</sup>.

Businesses that employ Apprentices and Training Providers have been advised that they can access the range of Treasury financial support measures put in place to support the majority of business across the country (i.e. Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan etc). Training providers have been encouraged to deliver training to Apprentices remotely, however if there is a break in an Apprentice's learning, the provider will not be paid for the duration of the break. This follows standard procedure, in that the Government pays training providers retrospectively for training delivered.

Training for 70% of English Apprenticeships is provided by private companies, however unlike further education colleges (who will continue to receive payments for services regardless of potential breaks in

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<sup>2</sup> Apprenticeships and skills policy in England (2 April 2020). Chapter 5, page 18.

<sup>3</sup> Apprenticeships and skills policy in England (2 April 2020). Chapter 1, page 4-5.

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learning), Apprenticeship training companies have been advised to seek the Treasury Financial support. This has caused significant concern. 49% of training providers in a recent survey stated they were at risk of closure, and there are claims of double standards by DfE which continues to fund FE colleges. The Association of Employment and Learning Providers has published a statement calling on the Government to “urgently rethink its stance”<sup>4</sup>. At the time of writing the Government position is unchanged.

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 REGIONAL CONTEXT
 

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Cornwall’s Devolution Deal, signed in July 2015 has an employment and skills aspect that focuses on increasing the number of people with higher level skills, combating underemployment and supporting those furthest from the labour market to get the skills and experience needed to find work. National surveys of employers suggest that CloS has a higher proportion of ‘Skills Shortage Vacancies’ and ‘Skills Gaps’, and whilst improvements have been made to proportions of people holding level 4 qualifications, there continues to be a large number of people without level 2 qualifications. There is also evidence to support a ‘low wage, low skill equilibrium’, with employers in CloS significantly less likely to cite that ‘candidates having a particular level of achievement or qualification is either a critical or significant factor when recruiting’ (33% in CloS compared to 49% in England). A large proportion of the CloS population remaining in low paid, insecure employment.

In 2016 the Government agreed a Sustainability and Transformation partnership in Cornwall to transform health and social care services<sup>5</sup>. This involves several stakeholders including NHS Kernow, Cornwall Council, the Council of the Isles of Scilly, and other local partners working with NHS England and other partners. The partnership includes a business plan to move progressively towards the integration of health and social care into the region’s employment and training services.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP Employment Skills Strategy (2016-2030) has a headline aim “for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly to have healthy, skilled and productive workforce with access to rewarding jobs, clear progression pathways and opportunities for all by 2030”<sup>6</sup>. The LEP will provide strategic leadership to synchronise supply and demand for employment and skills, resulting in a transformational change for current and future generations. The LEP has four strategic employment objectives (SO’s), designed around local priorities that are reviewed annually. SO2 and SO4 closely linked to the Campaign.

- SO1: Developing a highly skilled workforce for tomorrow. Areas of focus include enabling the demand and supply of skills to meet future economic needs, with ERDF and ESIF funding being utilised to support skills development programmes and events that engage employers and skilled staff. The SO aims to retain and attract skilled individuals and improve the availability of STEM skills.
- SO2: Driving employer and individual engagement and investment in skills. SO2 emphasises the need for the supply of high-quality skills to meet the needs of high employment sectors and features a policy to “create an effective Apprenticeship service for CloS employers”. Dedicated resources will be provided to public and private sectors to aggregate sector based demand for skills and

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tes.com/news/dfE-happy-Apprentice-providers-go-bust>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/shaping-the-future-of-health-and-social-care-services/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cioslep.com/assets/file/Cornwall%20and%20IoS%20Employment%20and%20Skills%20Strategy%20Appendix%201%20P1.pdf>

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understand the future skills pipeline. Improved workforce health and wellbeing will be supported, with a strategic approach to community/family learning. Attention is also directed to supporting small, micro, social and community businesses, as well as the self-employed, by improving accesses to intensive training/support.

- SO3: Enabling people to access and progress in meaningful employment: A call was developed to help the progression of lower paid workers and the 'under employed', as well as the usage of adult education funding to help workforce progression within the Devolution Deal. Models of good practice will be built on to support people who are furthest from the labour market, with improved access to support for businesses to employ those people. A strategic response was developed to support those at risk of leaving the labour market, for example older people.
- SO4: Enabling people to learn about career pathways and be equipped for the world of work. The Apprenticeship Campaign sits largely under SO4 with an action for the Apprenticeship steering group to develop the website and 'create a sustainable web-based portal for the Apprenticeship Offer' and provide co-ordination to the CloS Apprenticeship offer, specifically for employers. There was also a desire to develop an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) type model to support micro businesses and SMEs and plug the gap in recruitment and matching services. There was an ambition to develop higher and degree level Apprenticeships, evaluate the impact of funding changes on SME engagement and identify the priority Apprentice standards/frameworks for further development to meet local economic growth needs. There was an aspiration to promote the value of Apprenticeships and vocational pathways and raise awareness of Apprenticeships as a progress route for all workers.

The Skills Strategy also provides an Apprenticeship Action Plan. It notes that a co-ordinated and collaborative approach is central to developing the Apprenticeship service, informed by continual evaluation of the contexts of Apprenticeships, regional sectoral demands and priorities.

The LEP also aims to capitalise on CloS strengths and unique characteristics to exploit new and emerging markets with an identified competitive advantage. The LEP will support focused skills development in the five Smart Specialisation sectors that were identified in the Skills Strategy, Agri-tech, Digital Economy, E-Health/Wellbeing, Marine Technology and Space and Aerospace. Higher level and technical skills provision is seen to be vital in ensuring the growth of these Smart Specialisation Sectors, with an additional 3,330 jobs required between 2016 – 2022, demanding STEM skills specifically.

### 1.6. MARKET CONTEXT OF APPRENTICESHIPS

After the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017 there was a fall in the number of Apprenticeship starts, with 2017/18 seeing 125,200 fewer starts than in 2016/17. This decrease reflected an increased complexity within the new system and there some criticisms from business groups at the time<sup>7</sup>. For instance, the British Chambers of Commerce stated somewhat bluntly in May 2018 that the "new system isn't working". Smaller businesses were said to now face "more barriers, complexity and costs in recruiting and training staff", while larger businesses were reporting that "the inflexibility of the system has made it

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<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/news/2017/09/bcc-new-Apprenticeship-system-is-increasing-costs-and-uncertainty-for-business>

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*difficult to spend their levy funds, meaning less money available to pay for training people*". The manufacturing sector was reportedly holding back recruitment of Apprentices because of the requirements, with up to 95% of manufacturers demanding reform.

The problems identified related to the complexity of the levy and the inflexibility of levy funds which can only be used for Apprenticeship training and costs. This meant some employers struggled to spend the funds to upskill their workforce. For non-levy paying businesses, the requirement to pay 10% of an Apprenticeship's costs was seen to be too high, especially when coupled with increases in minimum wage. The 20% training commitment provides challenges for some employers, as it reportedly demands too much time taken away from the Apprentice's role. A City of Guilds report found that 29% of employers think the training time requirements are unsuitable<sup>8</sup>. Further issues include an inability to recruit suitable Apprentices and limited offers of tailored training being offered by providers, both being a significant barrier to employing Apprentices.

The Government initially responded to feedback in 2018, by allowing levy-paying businesses to transfer up to 10% of the annual value of their levy funds to other organisations (which was further increased to 25% in April 2019). Again in 2019, the Government also reduced the contribution non-levy paying employers made towards the cost of training and assessment from 10% to 5%. The latest Government position (as of March 2020) is an ongoing commitment to reforming the Apprenticeship levy with concerns of businesses taken into account.

Since the most recent reforms, there has been an increase in Apprenticeship starts at higher levels (level 4 and above). Also, in 2018/19, 63% of Apprenticeship starts were on standards, which are seen to be of a higher relevance than frameworks, as the education and training is designed by the employer. The government has also reported a 26% rise in average expected training hours in the year, following the 20% training time requirement that was established in 2017. Total Apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 were 393,000, which is still 20% lower than starts in 2016/17. The government claims the quality of Apprenticeships has improved, with longer, more high-quality Apprenticeships increasing. The funding system is viewed to be coming out of its initial period of change, and by 2020, available funding is expected to be twice what was available at the start of decade.

The following Chapter looks at the performance of the Campaign and take-up of Apprenticeships.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cityandguilds.com/-/media/cityandguilds-site/documents/what-we-offer/employers/Apprenticeship-levy-report-pdf.ashx?la=en&hash=C8CFDD81AE7CA4458022C75B10108EE18398BE28>



## 2. CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE & APPRENTICESHIP UP-TAKE

This chapter reviews the performance of the telemarketing Campaign and digital media activity. CloS Apprenticeship uptake is compared to English Apprenticeship starts.

### 2.1. REVIEW OF TELEMARKETING

#### Apprenticeship Awareness Campaign Telemarketing and Employer Research Headlines

| KPI   | Number | % of 5,000 business contact target | % of businesses contacted | % of businesses engaged |
|---|--------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Businesses contacted                       | 5,279  | 105.6%                             | 100.0%                    |                         |
| Contacts engaged                              | 589    | 11.8%                              | 11.2%                     |                         |
| Contacts closed                               | 2,212  | 44.2%                              | 41.9%                     |                         |
| Contacts remaining open                       | 2,478  | 49.6%                              | 46.9%                     |                         |
| 2. Interested in further info.                | 334    | 6.7%                               | 6.3%                      | 56.7%                   |
| 3. Skills Hub to get in touch                 | 34     | 0.7%                               | 0.6%                      | 5.8%                    |
| 4. To be added to email bulletins             | 263    | 5.3%                               | 5.0%                      | 44.7%                   |
| 5. Info to be provided via post               | 51     | 1.0%                               | 1.0%                      | 8.7%                    |
| 6. Taken website address                      | 241    | 4.8%                               | 4.6%                      | 40.9%                   |
| 7. Information needed 'right now'             | 44     | 0.9%                               | 0.8%                      | 7.5%                    |
| Skills Hub to call                            | 13     | 0.3%                               | 0.2%                      | 2.2%                    |
| Information to be sent                        | 28     | 0.6%                               | 0.5%                      | 4.8%                    |
| Businesses will find info.                    | 3      | 0.1%                               | 0.1%                      | 0.5%                    |
| 8. Aware of Cornwall App. Training Agency     | 129    | 2.6%                               | 2.4%                      | 21.9%                   |
| Potential Ambassadors                         | 18     | 0.4%                               | 0.3%                      | 3.1%                    |
| Request for Skills Hub Advisor direct contact | 34     | 0.7%                               | 0.6%                      | 5.8%                    |

Source: Cornwall Skills Hub, PFA Research.

The telemarketing Campaign aimed to promote Apprenticeships in CloS and the Growth/Skills Hub. It contacted local businesses to assess their awareness and provide more information and connections. Just under a third of businesses (30%) were aware of the Growth/Skills Hub with around a fifth (22%) finding out about it through a navigator. It found a similar number (21%) were struggling to recruit employees. Over half (54%) would like to upskill or increase their workforce with 34% likely to increase their workforce in the future. 14% of businesses currently have an Apprentice and a further 20% have employed an Apprentice within the last few years.

70% of businesses with an Apprentice described it as a positive experience. 63% were aware of how Apprenticeship schemes worked. 82%, 55% and only 24% of respondents were aware that Apprenticeships were available for school and college leavers, university graduates and part-time or seasonal workers respectively. A third (35%) of businesses who wanted to expand their workforce had researched whether Apprenticeships would be suitable.

5,279 employers were contacted which exceeded the target of 5,000 by 5.6%. 589 (11.2%) engaged. 334 contacts (6.3% of businesses contacted) were interested in further information, and the Skills Hub were

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requested to get in touch with 34 businesses (0.6% of those contacted). 263 (5% of businesses contacted) were added to email bulletins and 51 (1%) received information via post.

4.6% of businesses (241) took the website address during the telemarketing Campaign. 44 businesses (0.8%) needed information immediately, with 28 asked for information to be sent, 13 were going to give the Skills Hub to call and three claimed that they would find information independently.

129 businesses (2.4%) were aware of the Cornwall Apprenticeship Training Agency. 18 potential Apprenticeship Ambassadors were identified, 0.3% of those contacted. 34 businesses (0.6%) requested direct contact from a Skills Hub Navigator.

The following table shows the headline responses extrapolated to the 2019 Cornish Business population. Looking at awareness, when extrapolated, as many as 7,300 businesses had heard of the Growth/Skills Hub. So penetration levels are good at 30%, though there is still a cohort of some 17,000 who have not heard of the Growth/Skills Hub. There are an estimated 1,800 who would like to upskill their workforce who have considered an Apprentice. At the time of the survey, there were some 5,100 businesses struggling to recruit. There are potentially some 10,900 firms who did not realise you could use graduates and 18,400 who did not know that Apprenticeships were available for part time or seasonal work. These could be possible future Campaign targets (see Recommendations).

#### Extrapolation of Telemarketing Intelligence

|  | %    | Number |
|--|------|--------|
| Total Number of Businesses                             | 100% | 24,255 |
| Sample interviewed                                     | 22%  | 5,279  |
| Awareness of the Growth/Skills Hub                     | 30%  | 7,277  |
| Struggling to Recruit                                  | 21%  | 5,094  |
| Number of above who have considered an Apprentice      | 35%  | 1,783  |
| Would like to upskill or increase their workforce      | 54%  | 13,098 |
| Aware that could use school leavers                    | 82%  | 19,889 |
| Aware that could use graduates                         | 55%  | 13,340 |
| Aware that available for part-time or seasonal workers | 24%  | 5,821  |

Source: Pfa Research, Kada Research, ONS 2019

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## 2.2. REVIEW OF DIGITAL MARKETING

## WEBSITE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Cornwall Apprenticeships Google Analytics Data

| Metric                   | 1st May 2018- 30th Nov 2018 | 1st May 2019- 30th Nov 2019 | Percentage change |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| No. of Users             | 7,274                       | 6,637                       | -8.76%            |
| No. of New Users         | 6,989                       | 6,398                       | -8.46%            |
| No. of Sessions          | 10,182                      | 8,881                       | -12.78%           |
| No. of Sessions per User | 1.40                        | 1.34                        | -4.29%            |
| No. of Pageviews         | 20,898                      | 18,647                      | -10.77%           |
| No. of Pages per Session | 2.05                        | 2.1                         | 2.44%             |
| Average Session Duration | 00:01:25                    | 00:01:42                    | 13.60%            |
| Bounce Rate              | 51.20%                      | 39.35%                      | -23.14%           |

Source: Oracle Design

The website was updated as part of the PR Campaign. The table shows we analytics collated during the PR Campaign (1<sup>st</sup> May to the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2019) compared to the same period the previous year (2018). It shows metrics such as the number of users, sessions, pageviews and bounce rates.

6,637 users reached the site in during the 2019 period including 6,398 new users (98%), a decline of 8.8% in comparison to 2018. There was a 13.6% improvement in the average session duration of visitors to the website from 00:01:25 minutes to 00:01:42. There was also a noticeable decrease in the bounce rate by 23.1%, in 2019. A bound rate is defined as 'the percentage of single interaction visits to a website'. It decreased from 51.2% to 39.4%. Bounce rate ranges are typically categorised as excellent (26-40%), average (41-55%) and higher than average (56-70%). The Cornwall Apprenticeships website bounce rate has moved from average to excellent during the Campaign period with a 39.4% bounce rate in 2019. This shows that users are engaging with the website more. Data on the number of pages viewed per session supports this. There was a slight increase of 2.4% from 2.05 in 2018 to 2.10 in 2019.

85.2% of website users were returning users in 2019, compared to the 83.2% in 2018. The data shows that whilst the number of users and new users has decreased, the website user engagement has increased. The top 10 pages visited during the 2019 Campaign were as follows:

1. Cornwall Apprenticeships homepage (8,018 views)
2. Individuals → Finding an Apprenticeship (6,584 views)
3. Local training providers (635 views)
4. Employers → How to hire an Apprentice (325 views)
5. Case Studies (254 views)
6. Case Studies → See the benefit of using Apprentices in their businesses (254 views)
7. About us (176 views)
8. News events (174 views)
9. Contact Us (173 views)
10. Employers → How much does it cost? (158 views).

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58.7% of website users were female and 41.3% were male. Over 25% of users fall within the 25-34 age bracket, followed by 45-54 year olds (22.5%). Acquisition data highlights that over two thirds of users came to the site through organic searches (69.2%), followed by direct, social and referral channels.

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 SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE
 

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## Social Media Performance

| Platform | Impressions | Engagements | Post Link Clicks | Account Name             |
|----------|-------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Twitter  | 117,346     | 1,141       | 161              | @CloSApprentice          |
| Facebook | 176,017     | 3,621       | 878              | @ciosApprentice          |
| LinkedIn | 3,776       | 233         | 59               | Cornwall Apprenticeships |

Source: DCA's Cornwall Apprenticeships Social Media report 1st May 2019- 11th March 2020.

The PR Campaign (May to November 2019) operated across different platforms, covering the Cornwall Apprenticeships website, and social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn). During this time, paid for social media promotion was also used, which had a budget of £1,200.

Looking at Facebook:

- The account has a net Page Likes total of 338 (to March 2020), 292 were paid page likes.
- Published a total of 271 posts (127 photos, 116 links, 23 videos and 5 texts).
- An engagement rate per impression of 2.1%.
- 75% of the audience were female and 25% male.
- The most common age range was 35-44.

In terms of Twitter:

- The Twitter account had 1,384 followers and a net follower growth of 243.
- Published a total of 293 posts (137 photos, 124 links, 16 videos and 16 texts).
- An engagement rate per impression of 1.0% was achieved.
- 58% of the audience were male and 42% female. Like Facebook the most common age range was 35-44.

In relation to LinkedIn:

- The Cornwall Apprenticeships LinkedIn account has 47 followers (all organic followers gained).
- Published a total of 204 posts. Between June 2019 to October 2019 there was a minimum of 20 posts per month.
- An engagement per impression of 0.06 was achieved.
- The seniority level of the followers varied. The three most common levels are entry level (16 followers), senior (12 followers) and training (6 followers).

The PR Campaign received the most traction on Facebook, where there were 3,621 engagements and 878 post link clicks. Twitter published the most posts (293), whilst Facebook published the most videos (23). From November 2019 onwards, all social media metrics appear to show a decrease, possibly linked to the end of the paid for social media promotion.

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### 2.3. REVIEW OF TOOLKITS

#### EMPLOYERS' APPRENTICESHIP TOOLKIT

This [guide](#) was produced for businesses in CloS to explain how Apprenticeship training could support them to hire local talent, develop existing staff and support expansion. It provides up to date facts covering eligibility, types of role on offer, business impact, subsidised training outcomes, expectations, commitment needs and financial incentives. It offers Levy information and an explanation of the role of the training provider and advice on how to find the right provider. It also summarises some of the local challenges that employers face and offers a 'get up and go' eight-step plan for businesses wanting to proceed with Apprenticeship training. The guide also includes finance, funding and signposting information and an in-depth action plan, covering the pre, during and post Apprenticeship periods. It was described by one stakeholder as *"a comprehensive A-Z guide, very useful"*.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

The document provides pre-written content about the Campaign and the '#Add a Spark' Campaign. It describes how businesses can get involved with the Campaign using various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn via the links and handles provided, and the hashtag #AddaSpark. Apprenticeship related news stories, videos and events can be shared, and case studies are encouraged as they highlight businesses who are 'adding a spark' by taking on an Apprentice. The document has draft tweets and posts for businesses to use to promote the Campaign e.g. *'Fire up your business with an #Apprentice. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2P38RQC> and #AddaSpark. @CloSApprentice'*. Part of the campaign asked businesses to film a short video of themselves with sparklers saying, "we've added a spark". After approaching different businesses, only one business provided an Add A Spark video, suggesting there was little appetite for this particular approach. As a result, the video emphasis shifted to being geared more towards case studies and testimonials. These videos received an impressive 54,635 views across the different platforms from between May 2019 to March 2020.

### 2.4. ANALYSIS OF APPRENTICESHIP STARTS IN CORNWALL

CloS Apprenticeship starts increased by 6.3% from 3,990 in 2017/18 to 4,242 in 2018/19, 1.6% higher than the 4.7% increase experienced in England. There has been an increase in Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship starts in England and CloS. CloS Higher Apprenticeship starts increased by 34.2% to 494, lower than the 55.9% growth nationally partly reflecting the availability of provision. Advanced Apprentices have increased at a rate 2.7 times the national average (14.0% compared to 5.1%). The number of Intermediate Apprenticeship starts decreased in both geographies.

The starts by age band show that for both areas, the highest number of starts occurs within the 25+ age bracket. CloS has seen an increase in starts across all age bands, with a 14.1% increase in 25+, a 1.8% increase in the 19-24 range and 0.6% increase within 16-18 year olds. The latter shows an increase whilst in England there has been an 8.4% decrease within this range (from 106,440 in 2017/18 to 97,540 in 2018/19).



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## Apprenticeship Starts 2017/18 to 2018/19

| Starts                      | England* |         |          | CloS    |         |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|
|                             | 2017/18  | 2018/19 | % Change | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | % Change |
| Overall Starts              | 375,760  | 393,380 | 4.7%     | 3,990   | 4,242   | 6.3%     |
| Starts by Level             |          |         |          |         |         |          |
| Higher Apprenticeship       | 48,150   | 75,060  | 55.9%    | 368     | 494     | 34.2%    |
| Advanced Apprenticeship     | 166,220  | 174,730 | 5.1%     | 1,406   | 1,603   | 14.0%    |
| Intermediate Apprenticeship | 161,390  | 143,590 | -11.0%   | 2,211   | 2,145   | -3.0%    |
| Starts by Age Band          |          |         |          |         |         |          |
| **16-18                     | 106,440  | 97,540  | -8.4%    | 1,093   | 1,100   | 0.6%     |
| 19-24                       | 113,710  | 116,000 | 2.0%     | 1,278   | 1,301   | 1.8%     |
| 25+                         | 155,480  | 179,670 | 15.6%    | 1,614   | 1,841   | 14.1%    |
| Starts by Gender            |          |         |          |         |         |          |
| Female                      | 184,240  | 197,110 | 7.0%     | 1,796   | 1,946   | 8.4%     |
| Male                        | 191,520  | 196,270 | 2.5%     | 2,189   | 2,296   | 4.9%     |

Source: Department for Education Apprenticeship Annual Data, 2019

(\*May not sum due to rounding. \*\* Under 16 category not included).

The ratio of female to male starts in CloS remained relatively static (45:55 in 2017/18 compared to 46:54 in 2018/19). Despite an increase of 0.8% (in ratio) of female starts they are 4.2% below the national level. Whilst the number of 25+ starts has increased the proportion has declined.

## Age and Gender Change (Proportions)

|         | 2017/18 |        | 2018/19 |        | Change | 2017/18 |        | 2018/19 |        | Change |
|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
|         | Number  | %      | Number  | %      |        | Number  | %      | Number  | %      |        |
| **16-18 | 106,440 | 28.3%  | 97,540  | 24.8%  | 3.5%   | 1,093   | 27.4%  | 1,100   | 25.9%  | 1.5%   |
| 19-24   | 113,710 | 30.3%  | 116,000 | 29.5%  | 0.8%   | 1,278   | 32.1%  | 1,301   | 30.7%  | 1.4%   |
| 25+     | 155,480 | 41.4%  | 179,670 | 45.7%  | -4.3%  | 1,614   | 40.5%  | 1,841   | 43.4%  | -2.9%  |
| Total   | 375,630 | 100.0% | 393,210 | 100.0% |        | 3,985   | 100.0% | 4,242   | 100.0% |        |
| Female  | 184,240 | 49.0%  | 197,110 | 50.1%  | -1.1%  | 1,796   | 45.1%  | 1,946   | 45.9%  | -0.8%  |
| Male    | 191,520 | 51.0%  | 196,270 | 49.9%  | 1.1%   | 2,189   | 54.93% | 2,296   | 54.1%  | 0.8%   |
| Total   | 375,760 | 100.0% | 393,380 | 100.0% | 0.0%   | 3,985   | 100.0% | 4,242   |        |        |

Source: Department for Education Apprenticeship Annual Data, 2019

Looking at starts by subject area CloS, the most popular areas were Health, Public Services and Care (1,084, 25.6%), Business, Administration and Law (817, 19.3%), and Retail and Commercial Enterprise (753, 17.8%). In England the most popular subjects were Business, Administration and Law (118, 650, 30.2%), followed by Health, Public Services and Care (97,720, 24.8%), and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (59,970, 15.2%). CloS has a slightly higher proportion of Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies starts than in England (17.1% compared to 15.2%). Business, Administration and Law has 10.9% more than in England but the number of Leisure, Travel and Tourism starts seems low given the importance of this to the local economy.

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## Apprenticeships by Subject Area

| Starts by Subject Area                         | England |             | CloS   |             | Difference |
|--|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|------------|
|  | Number  | % of Starts | Number | % of Starts |            |
| Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care        | 6,650   | 1.7%        | 161    | 3.8%        | -2.1%      |
| Arts, Media and Publishing                     | 1,000   | 0.3%        | 5      | 0.1%        | 0.2%       |
| Business, Administration and Law               | 118,650 | 30.2%       | 817    | 19.3%       | 10.9%      |
| Construction, Planning & the Built Environment | 22,530  | 5.7%        | 394    | 9.3%        | -3.6%      |
| Education and Training                         | 7,110   | 1.8%        | 58     | 1.4%        | 0.4%       |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies     | 59,970  | 15.2%       | 724    | 17.1%       | -1.9%      |
| Health, Public Services and Care               | 97,720  | 24.8%       | 1,084  | 25.6%       | -0.8%      |
| ICT  | 21,110  | 5.4%        | 168    | 4.0%        | 1.4%       |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism                    | 7,220   | 1.8%        | 77     | 1.8%        | 0.0%       |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise               | 51,300  | 13.0%       | 753    | 17.8%       | -4.8%      |
| Science and Mathematics                        | 130     | 0.0%        | 1      | 0.0%        | 0.0%       |

Source: Department for Education Apprenticeship Annual Data, 2019

Chapter 3.0 looks at good practice from elsewhere.

### 3. GOOD PRACTICE FROM ELSEWHERE

This section explores the strengths of other Apprenticeship campaigns and potential transferable lessons.

Other areas have also established Apprenticeship hubs and launched campaigns to increase the information available to businesses and individuals regarding Apprenticeships, with the aim of increasing Apprenticeship starts and enhancing employer understanding.

#### 3.1. STRONG SLOGANS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE AND VISIBILITY

A key aspect of most campaigns is a strong slogan or unified message. The Greater Manchester (GM) Apprenticeship Hub campaign slogan is 'See Different'. This is used across its social media platforms and within the hashtag #SeeDifferent (The hashtag takes you directly their Apprenticeship Hub). It is led by the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network, alongside the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Marketing Manchester. #SeeDifferent takes a holistic approach maximising impact through print media, a digital presence and a physical presence at regular events. The hashtag has been used by the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship & Careers Service (GMACS), Trafford Council and Wigan Council, Wigan Business and GM Chamber. Businesses such as Brother UK, Miba and Power Kitchen have also engaged with the campaign by tweeting the hashtag and uploading event attendance photos.

Similarly, others have adopted similarly distinctive slogans. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority launched a new Apprenticeship Portal in March 2019 with the slogan 'Be more. Be an Apprentice'.

The Government's national Apprenticeship campaign launched in 2019 has the slogan 'Fire It Up' which is used across its website and social media activity. It provides Apprenticeship information to over 51,000 Facebook followers. The campaign calls for individuals to 'blaze their own trail' and the campaign has multiple social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn). On Instagram they regularly post photos of Apprentices with digitally photoshopped electric currents surrounding them as a way of conveying the 'Fire It Up' message. This is an easy way to market their slogan and does not require businesses to create their own visual effects like the #AddaSpark campaign.

Leeds Apprenticeship Hub has 2,764 followers on Twitter and 3,245 likes on Facebook. They post regular updates, including event details e.g. recruitment fairs and sector specific events. On Facebook new vacancies are regularly posted with a short description of the role, the business and wage. This keeps followers up to date with opportunities. The GM Apprenticeship Hub shares links to their Apprenticeship Hub quiz which tests knowledge of Apprenticeships and has a £50 Amazon voucher prize. Utilising social media and competitions campaigns can drive traffic to the websites and increase overall engagement.

#### 3.2. ACTION PLANNING AND 'HOW TO GUIDES'

Many Apprenticeship websites have a clear suggested courses of action for businesses and individuals. The North East Growth Hub has an 'Employ an Apprentice' section which covers the benefits of employing Apprentices, a guide to Apprenticeship support published by the UK Government and a five-

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step Apprenticeship roadmap. Each step has a bullet point checklist that highlights requirements, useful websites and insights for businesses considering an Apprenticeship.

This step by step approach is also utilised by York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP's Growth Hub, How's Business (within a downloadable eBook) and the Apprenticeship Hub West which has a five step guide to employing an Apprentice. Cornwall Apprenticeships has an action plan within their downloadable Apprenticeship toolkit. This could be also published within the employers' section of the website so that businesses can see a succinct action plan that is immediately visible on the website.

Leeds City Region LEP has published a list of 'myth busters' on their Apprenticeship website page. This addresses tend common misconceptions e.g. "Apprenticeships are low quality, Apprenticeships are only for school leavers, and businesses are not taking on Apprentices". Succinct short paragraphs counter these statements effectively. Similarly, the Solent Apprenticeship Hub has a blog post that addresses the 'stigmas surrounding Apprenticeships'. It provides information and role models of high-profile individuals who started their careers with an Apprenticeship such as Jamie Oliver, Alexander McQueen and Karen Brady. Cornwall Apprenticeships currently has an FAQ page to address some of the same content, however users may not find the format as engaging as the examples listed above.

### 3.3. CASE STUDIES

A key aspect that all the Apprenticeship campaigns utilise are video case studies put forward by businesses and Apprentices. Some campaigns go further by including sections on their 'Apprenticeship Ambassadors', who are Apprentices that share their experiences on the websites. These can be seen on the GM Apprenticeship Hub and the Liverpool City Region Be More Hub. The 'Get Ahead' Sutton Apprenticeship Hub has an area dedicated to 'success stories', which highlights stories from successful Apprentices and has an area that gives visitors the information required to share their own stories. Whilst Cornwall Apprenticeships has an ambassadors' and case studies page, this could be emphasised more with short video case studies and discussions with the ambassadors.

The Cumbria Business Growth Hub & Rural Growth Network has a blog post focusing on recruiting, retraining and retaining older workers. The page includes statistics about the ageing population in the UK and Cumbria and toolkits for employers to use to support older workers.

In addition, Apprenticeship Hub West has information regarding the T-Level rollout in September 2020. There is a link to a support package for employers which includes guidance, 'how to' guides and pilot scheme information. Two short films of industry placements are also linked.

### 3.4. INTERACTIVE AND DYNAMIC ELEMENTS

Introducing more interactive elements can help to engage visitors to the website. The Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub provides a good example. They use an Apprenticeship funding interactive flow chart to help businesses visiting the site determine their funding position. The Get Ahead Sutton Apprenticeship Hub has a 'Let's Chat' function where they encourage communication via text, call or WhatsApp.

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The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has links to webinars on YouTube. The free recordings are directed at businesses within the business administration and customer services sectors and aim to develop Apprenticeship delivery. The Liverpool Be More Hub has a new external link to an interactive student Apprenticeship guide which includes 10 hours of self-directed learning activities for individuals. This includes activities, checklists, reflective questions and short films.

In addition, podcasts are used by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development to bring more dynamism to their website. The site has an Apprenticeships episode (number 111) which involves a conversation between Apprentices and HR professionals. The Humber Growth Business Hub uses visual engagement via a link to the Apprenticeships 'Get in. Go far' television advertisement. The video showcases Apprenticeship benefits and information, whilst also providing a link to the Get in Go Far website.

### 3.5. SECTORAL SUPPORT

The BBC Academy Podcast on BBC Sounds has an episode called 'BBC Apprenticeships: you're hired'. The 17-minute recording provides information on Apprenticeships within the production, journalism and broadcasting industries. It includes an interview with an Apprentice who participated in the BBC's Apprenticeship scheme and a discussion of Apprentices recruitment with the BBC's recruitment manager. The Government's 'Fire It Up' campaign has a rap video (#TheCalling) produced by Apprentices providing information and inspiration. It describes the production and launch of the video, targeting individuals interested in Apprenticeship in the entertainment and music industries.

### 3.6. ADVERTISING VACANCIES AND PROMOTING PROVIDERS

Liverpool's Be More Hub has introduced a page on their website for city region employers to upload their own Apprenticeship vacancies for individuals to view and apply for through the site. Be More claims that it is the 'first' to do this, indicating that they are introducing an easier way for businesses and individuals to both gain information and be a point of call for candidate applications. Be More has an application form that businesses fill out regarding the type of Apprenticeship which can then be published on the website. In addition, they provide an interactive map that shows what vacancies are available. The map can be adapted to fit criteria such as interest, area, provider, type/level and distance. Barnsley College advertises Apprenticeship vacancies categorised by sector. This makes it easier for individuals to navigate the vacancies as they can quickly find the roles that interest them.

Cornwall Apprenticeships currently uses a chart to list its training providers and the relevant information. This information could be delivered in a more dynamic way. Get Ahead Sutton Apprenticeship Hub provides a logo and short introductory paragraph to their training providers in addition to links for further information. This format is much easier to digest for website users.

### 3.7. RESPONSES TO THE CORONAVIRUS

There are a variety of responses to the Coronavirus from Apprenticeship and employer and training bodies throughout the UK, and most of these provide links to or clear summaries of the support which is clearly identified on the Government Websites.

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Examples include the following.

- Skills Development Scotland has FAQs offering advice, support and relevant contact information for individuals, pupils, learners, Apprentices, businesses and training and learning providers and services offered during [COVID-19](#).
- Skills for Health offers a [page with Apprenticeship updates](#) dedicated to Covid-19 resources and guidance and Solent LEP has a similar [page](#).
- Some LEPs such as the Marches LEP, OxLEP, Cumbria and [SEMLEP](#) are putting in links to the changes that the [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) is making to the Apprenticeship programme during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The collection of intelligence about how Coronavirus is affecting businesses. Cheshire and Warrington LEP has launched a business impact survey to understand how COVID-19 may be impacting businesses in the sub-region.

### 3.8. IMPLICATIONS

Key lessons from elsewhere:

- Having a clear slogan can help create, deepen and add resonance to the Apprenticeship support agenda, maximising social media posts and galvanising partners.
- A roadmap or simple action plan to help demonstrate the steps a business needs to take.
- Clear intelligence and FAQs to inform businesses and individuals including 'myth busters'.
- Case studies to get the message across, notably using videos recorded by businesses and individuals. The diversity of potential Apprenticeships can be showcased, for instance, older workers or graduates.
- More innovative approaches include podcasts and curated content such as blogs, TV adverts, YouTube recordings or video diaries.
- Interactive tools such as flow charts can be used to engage viewers on the website and provide information in a different format. Vacancies can be organised by sector or presented in an enticing way. Websites can be highly interactive allowing employers to upload vacancies.
- Presenting providers in an engaging way for employers and graduates.
- Social media Campaigns e.g. competitions and events to increase awareness and drive traffic to websites.
- Keeping interested parties up to date in relation to the fallout from the Coronavirus including changes to the programmes, collation of intelligence and resources and FAQs.



## 4. CAMPAIGN DELIVERY AND IMPACT (STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE)

This Chapter explores the implementation of the Campaign based on stakeholder observations (consultees are listed in Appendix One). It also considers the delivery of the Campaign and its strengths and challenges from the perspective of stakeholders and businesses who engaged with it.

### 4.1 MOTIVATIONS

#### DISPELLING MYTHS AND OFFERING IMPARTIAL ADVICE

A key motivation for the Campaign was to dispel common misconceptions surrounding Apprenticeships for instance showing that they can be suitable for people of any age.

*"People tend to see Apprenticeships as for young people. It was important, particularly in Cornwall where you have perhaps a more ageing workforce that employers were aware that Apprenticeships can be for those of almost any age really."*

*"Many dealt with Apprentices before in their old form. They think of school leavers who need lots of support".*

*"They don't realise they can have someone older or train an existing member of staff. They don't fully understand them".*

Employers welcomed an honest broker.

*"Some employers want some obscure Apprenticeships and Cornwall can be hard to provide training for small cohorts and travel distances makes this harder. We sometimes struggle to find the right training. We are an honest broker and carry out research for employers of Apprenticeship providers and try to give them free and impartial and trustworthy support".*

*"The Campaign is about myth busting and getting the right information published the employer feels is reliable, trustworthy and unbiased. They are often contacted by trainers who try to sell what they offer".*

Some employers had had a bad experience with Apprenticeships in the past, not known where to go for advice or fallen out with their training provider. Those that have been through the process can get frustrated finding it bureaucratic and uneasy to navigate. There is a role for the Campaign to offer alternatives, advice on administration and illustrate what can be achieved.

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**RAISING AWARENESS OF THE AVAILABILITY APPRENTICESHIP**

With only 14% of business surveyed having a current Apprentice, raising awareness of the availability of Apprenticeships in Cornwall remained a priority.

*"Sometimes I think they're [Apprenticeships] seen as a poor relation to a degree. What we wanted to do was educate employers that let them know there is a great selection available, that it doesn't cost the earth and that there is Government support there to cover the majority of costs".*

It was important that the Campaign messages were 'localised' so that they were meaningful.

*"We're dealing with employers and they like local messaging and case studies. National contacts wouldn't know the geography".*

For those already aware of Apprenticeships, stakeholders wanted to increase available information access via a clear, multi-dimensional Campaign.

*"We wanted to demystify the misconception that we pay for training and that we are a training provider, but we can be points of contact to the supplier base".*

Boosting awareness contributes to the national and local policy objective to increase the number of Apprenticeships starts and support business growth.

*"Businesses now see Apprenticeships as a good route to building their team, especially smaller businesses where you have an ageing workforce and businesses are looking at how they can bring more young people through".*

The two businesses interviewed sought Apprenticeship information to grow their businesses. One, who had a part time work experience employee doing one day a week, wanted to explore the option of moving them into a new full-time Apprenticeship role instead. The other business had previously sought an Apprentice through a local provider but were not satisfied with the candidates suggested and felt that the training was too far away.

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**LOCAL BARRIERS**

Timing, costs and capacity were key issues mentioned as barriers (many local employers were micro businesses). The requirement for 20% off site training and English and Maths was mentioned as challenge for some who have struggled to release staff.

*"Timing can be an issue for businesses as well. Sometimes they want to start a person straightaway, but they can't as the course doesn't start till September".*

*"There's a lack of understanding and it's a time thing, they need an employee but they haven't always got the time to train an Apprentice".*

*"Lots of them [micro businesses] struggle with training budgets and the practicality of taking new staff on".*

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Another challenge locally was transport *"which can be a real barrier in a rural location... if the wage is low then transport costs eat into what they're earning."* This can be exacerbated by type of jobs offered and particularly affecting those with unsociable hours and shift work.

One business found that location had been a barrier that could be overcome.

*"After speaking to the Apprenticeship team and having their research, it's clear that there were other options. It wasn't a perfect solution but they came up with ideas that I hadn't considered important before such as the delivery of the training."*

### 4.2 EXPERIENCE OF DELIVERY

#### WEBSITE

The refreshed website and logo for Cornwall Apprenticeships Campaign was well received, completed quickly and locally distinctive .

*"A real strength was the speed with which we got the website turned around".*

*"Having DCA on board was really good. Getting the website up and running fast was a key strength".*

*"I like initial impact the website has. It makes it very clear which direction you can go. I like the colours and its nicely style. It's linked to a local system so current vacancies can be displayed or pulled through".*

*"The website has the right balance between not too much information and offering useful updates".*

Both businesses who were interviewed claimed that the website was helpful, though they particularly welcomed follow up support available from the Campaign team and business navigators.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

The reach and quality of social media activity *"made the Campaign more present and visible"*. The social media Campaign *"went really well and has really grown"*. Paid for social media promotion was used to increase the Campaign's reach across the various platforms. There is scope to build on this activity. *"Next time round they need to build in budget to build in more regular activity so that case studies are proactively pushed out to the media"*. An analysis of social media engagement appears in Section 2.2.

Stakeholders were very pleased with case study videos. There is appetite for more of these and perhaps some more sector related examples. *"We received over 54,000 video views which we were delighted with because we felt that video is something that people really relate to."* Not all elements of Campaign activity worked as well. Within the social media toolkit for partners and businesses, the Add A Spark Campaign did not achieve the results that the Campaign hoped for as it was not adopted by businesses, resulting in only one video created and a subsequent lack of uptake of the #AddaSpark hashtag on social media posts. *"In the future, we'd have to come up with some kind of other device that would perhaps replace that and augment the activity"*. Strong campaign slogans from elsewhere are highlighted in Chapter 3.0.

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Neither business had seen social media activity from the Campaign with one stating that they do not engage with digital platforms. This stressed the importance of combining social media channels with more traditional platforms/forms of advice.

### TELEMARKETING

The telemarketing findings provided useful insights on employer intentions and awareness that informed the work of the Skills Hub and Navigators, though as noted earlier, it did absorb a large proportion of the budget (36%). Stakeholders thought it was perhaps less successful on lead generation where the strike rates were comparatively low. Feedback from the advisors suggests the quality of intelligence and leads was variable.

*"It would have been useful to hear what the PFA were doing as we weren't kept in the picture. The quality of information was sometimes poor as there weren't contact details. Many firms [followed up] didn't want contact from us, they just wanted information sent to them".*

*"It didn't really deliver the leads that they were hoping for, the original tender had quite a high conversion rate. I don't know how effective it was".*

*"I think that it has raised the awareness of the whole programme...there weren't huge amounts, but they were warm leads".*

*"It was useful for gathering feedback and it did generate quite a few employer contact details".*

One business claimed that the telemarketing was beneficial as it alerted them to the Campaign, *"I got a call and the name was at the back of my mind, so I googled the Campaign."* Another claimed that they were uncertain of the effectiveness as the call *"came out of the blue and I was really busy at the time"*.

### BUSINESS CONNECTOR SUPPORT

Although not funded by the Campaign both businesses commented that the help from the skills navigator was highly beneficial, they scored this element of support ten out of ten. The Campaign clearly has a useful signposting and referral function.

*"Speaking to the Navigator was really helpful as I have learnt that there's training available. I was probably too blinkered about going down a different route before the support."*

*"The person who I spoke to was brilliant, they rang back several times and gave more help and information."*

## 4.3 IMPACT

### RAISING AWARENESS AND PROVIDING INFORMATION

The Cornwall Apprenticeships Campaign helped raise awareness across the County of the benefits of Apprenticeships. *"It's helpful to tell the story as it helps raise awareness"*. One stakeholder did comment that was sometimes hard to ascertain the effectiveness of the Campaign when project outcomes were not widely publicised.

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The Campaign and the development of the new website in particular has improved the accessibility of relevant information and intelligence on Apprenticeships for employers and individuals alike.

*"The old site was dormant, and they wanted a fresh look...the idea was to ensure people could get access to as much information as possible before going to speak to anyone. The main requirement was that people could find information relatively easily".*

*"The fact that web users are staying longer and viewing more pages per session would suggest that they are finding more on the site to engage them than they did previously. I would say it's probably down to the variety and relevance of the content".*

Both businesses highlighted that the support had helped them make informed decisions. One commented that before the Campaign they were *"probably too blinkered"* in their views of Apprenticeships and particular providers and that they thought they would have to research/find their own solutions.

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### WORKING WITH INTERMEDIARIES

There has been activity 'behind the scenes' to get providers and intermediaries to work together and improve the Apprenticeship offer to employers. The skills team have been working with the CIOCareers Hub to promote Apprenticeships in schools and the Proud to Care network which highlights how rewarding a career in health and social can be. The Proud to Care website has a Job Search facility for jobs, work experience and Apprenticeship vacancies in Cornwall. This could be used as model for other sectors in tourism or construction for instance. The team have built up over 100 intermediary contacts in schools, unemployment support bodies and training providers to raise awareness and help to promote vacancies.

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### APPRENTICESHIP STARTS

When discussing the impact on Apprenticeship starts, stakeholders commented it would be impossible to quantify and directly attribute any change to the Campaign. However, one commented that *"the Campaign is not going to make a major cultural change, but Apprenticeship starts went up at the same time, so it is a contributory factor."* Another reiterated *"the uptake has increased slightly, but there's still a lot of work to be done."* Stakeholders believed that there has been *"success within the confines of the budget available"* and that the Campaign was *"part of the positive noise around Apprenticeships"*.

Since receiving support, one business has now taken on their previous work experience employee as a full-time Apprentice, commenting *"it has enabled us to build the business"*. The other business interviewed was in the process of recruiting an Apprentice, however due to the recent Covid-19 restrictions, will put this on hold until they subside.

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#### 4.4 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Amongst the improvements suggested there was a desire for more internal communication and to be more well informed about different aspects of the Campaign. *"I would have liked a communications report on how well we were doing... we didn't really see how effective it all was."*

There was a view that the PR and marketing activity could be extended.

*"I think it's about having a broader marketing mix, which is probably going to be key going forward...more channels for the Campaign and probably some more video budget".*

*"I would like to see more ambassadors, building on the work to date and not losing momentum with social media".*

*"We could do more in terms of regular case studies. We need to keep the momentum going".*

*"We need more PR outreach work, taking the message to the business but without telemarketing".*

Delivering a clear message was identified as important to overcoming the local challenges that are faced by Apprentices and employers. Different sectors and types of Apprenticeship could be promoted more widely, existing workers or Higher Apprenticeships for example. There is still the need to dispel the misconception that Apprenticeships are only for 16-18 year olds.

*"There are still preconceptions about what an Apprentice is, some businesses still think they're for 16-18 year olds."*

Establishing *"targeted messaging within the sectors as businesses can easily relate to this"* including *"myth-busters"* would be beneficial, particularly within sectors such as construction and adult social care which are experiencing challenges in recruiting employers.

The team would like to work more on assessing the implication of policy changes and helping to articulate changing employer skills needs and ensuring the supplier base is responsive to these. An example might be the requirement for heat pump engineers in renewable energy.

Having a funding pot top-sliced from the Apprenticeship Levy could help fund SME skills development and give the team and Skills Navigators something more tangible to offer employers. This idea of larger employers contributing to a County wide funding pot to support employers outside the levy is currently being explored. This would cover the 5% of costs employers have to pay.

One business found direct communication beneficial and suggested sending information packages to local colleges who could then refer prospective businesses to the Campaign and the Skills Hub. This could be an easy way to market the Campaign as contacting colleges was the business' first point of call.

Longer timescales were suggested to raise awareness and drive more traffic to the website. The duration of paid for activity could be reassessed and perhaps extended.

*"It would have been nice to continue the activity into the new year. I think if you look at social media traffic in particular, you will see how those graphs have dropped off in terms of the social engagement."*

## 5. CONCLUSIONS – PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES

This final chapter reflects on the performance of the Campaign against its objectives.

The first Campaign objective was to increase awareness of the benefits and features of Apprenticeships including changes to policy and funding. The telemarketing Campaign shows awareness of the Growth/Skills Hub was high. Whilst the number of users and new users has decreased slightly in 2019, the website's user engagement has increased with better average sessions durations and lower bounce rates. There is scope to drive more employers to the website.

There was an objective to increase the number of new employers recruiting Apprentices, re-engaging employers and increasing demand and starts for higher and degree level Apprenticeships. It is hard to tell from published statistics the balance of recruitment between new and existing employers but CloS Apprenticeship starts increased by 6.3% from 3,990 in 2017/18 to 4,242 in 2018/19, 1.6% higher than the 4.7% increase experienced in England. There has been an increase in Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship starts in England and CloS. CloS Higher Apprenticeship starts has increased by 34.2% to 494, lower than the 55.9% growth nationally. This partly reflects the availability of provision. Advanced Apprentices have increased at a rate 2.7 times the national average (14.0% compared to 5.1%). The number of Intermediate Apprenticeship starts has decreased within both geographies.

Looking at social media engagements, there is evidence of some business intermediaries supporting and raising awareness and interest in Apprenticeships (another Campaign objective). There has also been work with providers and the care sector in particular to enhance their Apprenticeship offers and South West Ambassadors who promote Apprenticeships to schools, young people and businesses. The Proud to Care approach could be used as model for other sectors. As mentioned earlier team have built up over 100 intermediary contacts in schools, unemployment bodies and training organisations to raise awareness and promote Apprenticeship vacancies suggesting good progress against this objective.

Another objective was to encourage workforce development, helping employers to understand how Apprenticeship training works for existing staff and equipping them to 'sell' Apprenticeships to their staff. The case studies and PR work have started to do this but is acknowledged there is more that could be done. When employers have been referred to a Skills Navigator through the Campaign they can help employers decide whether any new vacancies they might have could be offered as an Apprenticeship. This was one of the objectives of the Campaign so indirectly it has been able to achieve this but it's not immediately clear at what scale.

One objective was to identify and recruit new Apprenticeship Ambassadors from SMEs and develop a 'bank' of new employer case studies. There has been progress here and there is desire to build on this.

Recommendations for a Phase 2 of the Campaign appear in the Executive Summary.



## 6. APPENDIX ONE: CONSULTEES

| Name              | Position                             | Organisation                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Cathie Kessell    | Employment & Apprenticeships Officer | Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP        |
| Josh Hoole        | Skills Hub Manager                   | Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Skills Hub |
| Claire Hutchinson | Skills Navigator                     | Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Skills Hub |
| Jason Clarke      | Director                             | DCA                                   |
| Beate Galke       | Project Manager                      | PFA Research                          |
| Clare Harris      | Senior Skills Officer                | Cornwall Council Economic Development |
| Andrew Stone      | Managing & Design Director           | Oracle Design                         |
| Darren Lawrence   | DWP                                  | Employer Advisor Manager              |
| James Hutchins    | Director and Part Owner              | Element Engineering & Design Services |
| Lisa Kirk         | Owner                                | The Nail Gallery                      |



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