



CDI response to The All Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships call for evidence as part of its 2019/20 report.

Introduction to the CDI

The CDI (Career Development Institute) is the single UK-wide professional body for everyone working in the fields of career education; career information, advice and guidance; career coaching, career consultancy and career management.

It is governed by a Board and has a Professional Standards Committee and Council, all of which represent the institute's 4,700 members. Its purpose is to promote the value of using professionally qualified career development professionals that have the knowledge and skills required to enable young people and adults to make informed decisions about learning and work pathways; and have the ability to manage and plan their career and personal development.

At the request of the Government the CDI maintains the UK Register of Career Development Professionals qualified to at least QCF level 6 or above in Careers Guidance and Development. The work of the CDI and its members benefits individuals, communities and the economy by helping to shape people's experience of learning, the labour market and their life chances.

Higher apprenticeship Career Development Professional

In May 2019 the higher apprenticeship for Career Development Professionals¹ was approved for delivery by the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfAT). Designed by the Employers Group, the CDI was actively engaged in its development through the consultation process. A key component of the apprenticeship is the requirement to attain a level 6 or higher career-related qualification (minimum of 60 credits) approved by the Career Development Institute as giving eligibility to the Register of Career Development Professionals.

Together Training² was the first training provider to offer the Professional Career Development higher apprenticeship and a further six are registered³. In October 2019 Together Training enrolled 20 apprentices employed in and around Hertfordshire and a second cohort of 12 in March 2020. All are members of the CDI and are undertaking the OCR level 6 in Career Guidance and Development.

The opportunities and challenges faced in response to COVID-19

Following the closure of schools and colleges in March 2020 a key challenge faced by the career apprentices was the need to continue working with young people and adults on-line, many of whom were vulnerable and at risk of becoming disengaged with education, training and employment.

The closure also prohibited the apprentices from meeting face-to-face with their learning coaches or in a classroom environment at the Together Training business centre. However, it was critical that the apprentices were able to continue with their 'off-the-job-training' and their professional studies.

Fortunately none were furloughed and were able to work from home. However, Together Training had to use their best judgment and draw on prior experience in developing the training programme as they were advised that the OCR Quality Assurer had been furloughed.

¹ Higher Apprenticeship Career Development Professional <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/career-development-professional/>

² Together Training <https://www.togethertraining.co.uk/>

³ Government 'Find an Apprenticeship website' <https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/>

In addition the IfAT and the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) were not able to confirm an End Point Assessor Organisation (EPAO) and External Quality Assurance (EQA), without which apprentices could not complete the apprenticeship.

How the CDI and the Together Training responded and adapted to supporting apprenticeships

The CDI issued revised safe guarding guidelines to support career professionals working online⁴ and arranged a series of training webinars to support professional practice, e.g. 'Meeting the challenges of digital delivery – personal career guidance via telephone and video'. It also provided regular updates with details of developments in policy, practice and research through online announcements and newsletters.

The Together Training team swiftly transferred all face-to-face training to online, making good use of the platform facilities to deliver power points presentations, generate group discussion and share best practice. Likewise, support sessions between the Learning Coaches and Apprentices were shortened and conducted online and by telephone more frequently.

The CDI and Together Training worked in partnership to hold the IfAT and the ESFA to account and have reached an interim arrangement that allows the apprentices to complete the apprenticeship within the prescribed timescale. However, for many other apprenticeship programmes the appointing of an EPAO and EQA remain key issues⁵.

Recommendations for policy makers to support apprenticeships policy going forward

Career guidance is important to education and training providers because it increases the effectiveness of their provision by linking learners to apprenticeship programmes that meet their vocational identity. Similarly, it enables employers to find apprentices that meet their requirements and fosters efficiency in the allocation of human resources.

To ensure that people from all sectors of society can contribute to the rebuilding of the economy through meaningful work, including apprenticeships, we strongly recommend that young people and adults have access to qualified career professionals (at Level 6 and above) to support them through this unprecedented period of transition.

How we can ensure that apprenticeships play an important role in economic recovery beyond the COVID-19 crisis

In terms of economic recovery the important role of apprenticeships is three fold.

1. There has never been a greater need for an all age professional all-age careers service. An existing means of increasing the number of qualified career professionals is through the Career Development Professional higher apprenticeship and bringing the salaries of career development professionals in line with that of teachers.
2. Central to their role is the provision of impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Qualified career practitioners are best placed to support young people and adults in learning about apprenticeships and enabling them to weigh up the benefits of learning while earning.
3. The Apprenticeship Levy Fund is key to enabling employers to invest in the training and development of the future workforce and reduces the burden of debt placed on the individual to fit themselves for the labour market. The Levy supports economic recovery and social justice.

⁴ Safe and ethical virtual meetings - https://www.thecdi.net/write/CDI-Position-Paper_on_safe_and_ethical_virtual_meetings.pdf

⁵ Lindsay McCurdy Founder- Apprenticeships & End Point Assessment Directories <https://mailchi.mp/868c72645da5/the-future-for-the-apprenticeship-sector?e=3eddad1cae>