

TOMORROW'S

HIGH

FLYERS

Inside this issue:

JHP helps children's
charity take off

No ordinary apprenticeships!
Are you the next Bond?

The Holt Review:
Apprenticeships and
SME non-engagement

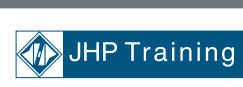
Digital skills for a
digital future

ABOUT JHP GROUP

Established in 1983, JHP Group is one of the largest providers of employment and training solutions in the UK.

Our wide range of employability programmes, Apprenticeships, vocational training and professional qualifications enable individuals to start and strengthen their career across a range of sectors.

Working in partnership with local communities and employers, our bespoke solutions develop workforces and promote social and economic inclusion.



“Passionate about improving skills, raising aspirations and creating opportunities”



Our thanks to...

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The next edition of Voice will be published in the winter. If you have any feedback, article suggestions or ideas that you'd like to share then we'd love to hear from you. Please email:

communications@jhp-group.com

Thank you.

THIS ISSUE

Welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of Voice, the theme of which is 'Tomorrow's High-Flyers.' In my role as Business Development Director it's essential to keep abreast of developments within the training sector and ensure that JHP Group is well placed to respond to the needs of learners, employers and the range of industry sectors in which we operate.

Apprenticeships have been high on the news agenda over the last few months. In this edition we examine the findings of the Holt Review, take a look at what the political parties are saying about the issue and even give you the perspective of a JHP Apprentice as she enters her second year of work and study.

We also take a look at how some of our Foundation Learning students are putting their skills to good use in an effort to support a children's charity, examine how JHP Group is helping to equip its learners with essential IT skills and report back on some exciting developments with major businesses, including The Co-operative and Tesco.

So, take a look inside to see how the choices our learners make today are helping to turn them into tomorrow's high-flyers.



John Deaville,
Business Development Director

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/Foreword



Anne Tipple,
National Skills
Executive,
British Chambers
of Commerce

I've been involved with the Chambers of Commerce movement for nearly 30 years, in one capacity or another, and I'm passionate about acting as a voice for small business. I see myself as an interpreter for the concerns of the SME sector and believe strongly in ensuring that its views and opinions are communicated coherently to Government and other interested parties.

So when I was asked to participate in the Holt Review and its follow up, the Richard review of Apprenticeships, it was a fantastic opportunity to communicate clearly the SME viewpoint on the Apprenticeship and vocational training landscape. If I've learned anything over the years it's that small businesses, in particular, don't have the time to effectively engage with, or even think about, issues such as skills training as they're often too busy getting on with their day-to-day business.

Effective Communication

I like to think I help to create an environment where they can think about these issues and formulate responses to communicate to Government and the training sector. It helps to ensure that they hear what the real concerns of small business are from the horse's mouth.

Both reviews illustrated pretty clearly that the SME sector's over-riding concern is the 'lack of preparation of our young people leaving full-time education for the world of work.' Time after time this was cited as a huge issue for many employers. And it isn't just the numeracy and literacy skills that are problematic. Many businesses pointed to the inability of young people new to the world of work to understand what happens in

the workplace, what sort of jobs there might be and even how to behave in the work environment. Even university graduates lack many of the soft skills, such as being able to act on their own initiative, or communicate effectively either through email, verbally or in a team situation, that employers demand. This leads to a need for significant investment in both time and money from employers to get them up to speed with acceptable working practices that many just can't afford to spend.

Effective engagement

In a recent report, Skills for Business: More to Learn, we discovered that more than half, 55%, of businesses have little confidence in the suitability of university graduates and that almost 72% feel the same way about those with A Level qualifications. However, 65% of businesses said they had or want to have some form of engagement with schools, colleges and universities. So it's plain that the will is out there to get engaged and we need to tap into this goodwill if we're to improve the current situation.

What we need is for organisations such as the BCC to act as a go-between to ensure that the needs and aspirations of small businesses are communicated effectively to every training provider, so they can tailor their training provision accordingly.

Effective training

And it's that specific tailoring that could be the key to creating a better training environment for everyone. Private sector training providers are in a much better position to deliver the young people with the skills businesses are crying out for than many public sector funded providers. They're more responsive and flexible to providing SMEs with the type of training that produces effective employees that will add value to their business.

From an SME perspective, training providers are very much a supporter and 'helping hand' for businesses that aim to improve their workforce by drafting in young people that can perform effectively in a real world environment, deliver the skills employers need and help the sector grow.



Industry news

Apprenticeships high on political agenda

Youth unemployment in the UK is now estimated at more than 1 million 16 – 24 year olds, so it's no real surprise that political leaders of all the major parties are discussing how best to address the problem. With the conference season over and MPs returning to parliament to get on with the real business of politics, we take a look back at what they had to say on the issue.

The Liberal Democrats kicked off the conference season and leader Nick Clegg was keen to highlight how his party is tackling the problem. Speaking about school leavers in particular he said: "We're providing scholarships, bursaries, grants, loans, Apprenticeships and wage subsidies, to help them go on learning or start earning... [We're doing] everything possible to get people into work – millions of new jobs and more Apprenticeships than ever before."

Cultural change is needed



Labour leader Ed Milliband was also keen to play up his party's job creation credentials and stressed that in his view "...we've got to change the culture in this country and there needs to be that real route to Apprenticeships. "Only one in three large employers in Britain actually offers Apprenticeships. And if anything, in the public sector the situation is far, far worse. That is about the culture of a country which hasn't been dealt with for decades. It is the task of the next Labour government to do that."

And David Cameron sent out a clear message that his government intends to address the issue head on and that business has its part to play in tackling the problem. He said, "...when a balanced economy needs workers with skills, we need to end the old snobbery about vocational education and training. We've provided funding for 250,000 extra Apprenticeships - but not enough big companies are delivering. "So here's a direct appeal: If you want skilled employees, we'll provide the funding, we'll cut the red tape. But you've got to show more leadership and give us the Apprenticeships we need."

Good business sense

Meanwhile, official figures just released show that more than half a million people began an Apprenticeship during the last academic year (August 2011 – June 2012). Skills Minister Matthew Hancock said, "The Apprenticeship programme shows the Government's passion for delivering the skills Britain needs. And my message to employers is simple: Apprenticeships make good business sense. I urge all employers to get involved." According to the National Apprenticeship Service the Government expects to invest around £1.5 billion in apprenticeships in 2012–13 and support more than 700,000 apprentices in training. JHP Group will play a critical role in supporting the Government's aspirations by delivering the

employability skills and high-quality training that will be essential if the policy is to be successful.

Upskilling opportunities

Paul Warner, director of employment and skills at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), said: "Whichever party is in power after the next election, we can expect an increasing priority on funding apprenticeship provision for young people, although AELP is pleased that the current government remains committed to all-age apprenticeships as an important means for employers to upskill their workforce.

"Our members, including JHP Group, are doing a terrific job in engaging more employers to get involved in apprenticeships, but securing the interest of smaller businesses remains a big challenge. This is why we have submitted proposals to ministers which suggest employers using vouchers with quality approved providers to redeem some of the cost of taking on an apprentice."



Industry News

Job Search – a challenge in itself



Research carried out by **The Joseph Rowntree Foundation** has illustrated just how challenging job searching can be for young people with limited education and skills. The study interviewed employers and young job seekers, analysed vacancy data and submitted 2,001 job applications on behalf of well-qualified fictional candidates for 667 real jobs in three contrasting local labour markets.

Even the most difficult local labour markets have vacancies, but jobseekers have particular skills, experience, preferences and constraints, and can't apply for every vacancy. The situation varies geographically – people in some areas face a more difficult task than others. In the areas studied, competition varied from more than five jobseekers per notified vacancy in the strongest local labour market to more than ten in the weakest one.

The study searched for job vacancies requiring limited education and skills in the three local labour markets over ten months, some of which had unattractive pay and conditions. 76% were part time, or had non-standard hours, or both; 78% paid less than £7 per hour (under the 'living wage') and 54% paid the minimum wage.

Many jobseekers were prepared to take any job, but vacancies with minimal or non-standard hours and low pay posed real constraints for people trying to combine several jobs and achieve a positive work/life balance, or who would incur extra costs (eg travel, childcare, uniforms) in taking such jobs.

While most jobseekers were willing to travel, more than half of the vacancies would have been difficult for those living in deprived neighbourhoods without transport to get to. Employers expressed a preference for local applicants, especially for jobs with non-standard hours. This suggests that policies recommending that people should search further afield for work

won't necessarily succeed in getting more people into employment.

Jobseekers need to apply quickly

Some employers (notably smaller private-sector firms) looked at applications as soon as they arrived and closed vacancies very quickly. The study found that those sent one to three days after jobs were advertised were twice as likely to receive positive responses as those sent after a week. This suggests that jobseekers need to search daily and respond to vacancies quickly. Job seeking is 'a job in itself'. Those without home Internet access or who can only job search sporadically are subsequently disadvantaged.

Young people tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged during economic crises, and the current context presents the most challenging labour market for them in recent decades. Although supply-side measures may help particular groups, only measures adding to the total number of jobs in weak local labour markets will impact on overall employment and unemployment rates.

Despite public perceptions of 'postcode discrimination' as jobseekers seek explanations for persistent rejection, the study found that postcode discrimination should not be a concern, at least for well-qualified applicants at the first selection stage. People from neighbourhoods with poor reputations weren't statistically disadvantaged.

A 'very active' job search is critical

Jobseekers need help to develop good intelligence and tailor strategies about their local labour market. Much of this assistance could be generated through the Department for Work and Pensions' websites and databases, according to the report. Leading employers and intermediaries could be encouraged to improve information to employers and applicants.

Support from advisers and feedback from employers may reduce the discouraging effect of failed applications. The study found that 7 out of 10 good applications received no response, which is very frustrating when candidates invest a lot of time and effort in the application. Although some jobseekers changed strategies in the face of non-response and rejection, broadening their search or seeking new qualifications, others were left demotivated.

It's plain to see from the report's findings that there's no 'one size fits all' approach to successful job seeking for disadvantaged young people. Job seekers need to carefully research local job markets, engage in high levels of job search activity and above all be persistent if they are to succeed.



The study found that applicants need to adopt many of the approaches that JHP Employability customers learn as part of the programmes we provide:

- ➡ Conduct a very active job search
- ➡ Use a tailored approach – don't apply indiscriminately!
- ➡ Apply quickly
- ➡ Have Internet access
- ➡ Search daily
- ➡ Develop good job skills/Employability skills are just as important as qualifications
- ➡ Apply for applications nearby – some employers, particularly for jobs with unsocial hours won't consider applicants that are too far away
- ➡ **Good applications succeed eventually!**

One of the respondents in the report, a hotel manager in the 'weak' local labour market, said that recruitment for cleaning and housekeeping staff was now entirely through a private sector provider of employability services, which sent workers on a work trial: 'we take them on for four weeks and it's absolutely free. Then we can say whether they are suitable or not.' This recruitment method was deemed to be working so well that it was being recommended to other hotels within the chain.



To full report is available from the Joseph Rowntree Foundations website:
www.jrf.org.uk/publications/disadvantaged-young-people-work

45,300



An increase of 45,300 in the number of starts compared to last year

The Government said the increase of apprentice jobs compared with the 2010/11 academic year was a "momentous" achievement.

2.53m



Total number of people unemployed down

Unemployment fell by 50,000 to 2.53m in the three months to August, taking the jobless rate down to 7.9% from 8.1%.

502,500



Total number of apprenticeship starts compared to 457,200 in 2010/11

Apprenticeship starts pass the symbolic mark of 500,000 starts last year, with strong growth at advanced and higher levels.

126,300



Total number of under-19 apprenticeship starts

The number of under-19 apprenticeship starts declined to 126,300 from 128,300; for the first time since the beginning of the financial crisis.

957,000



Total number of young people aged 16-24 unemployed

In the period June-August 2012, there was a decrease of 62,000 young people unemployed. This is the biggest quarterly fall since the three months to November 1997.



JHP Learners help children's charity reach for the sky

Andy Williamson, TCAA CEO pictured with pop star Simon Le Bon (right)

The Children's Air Ambulance (TCAA), which will provide a national bespoke helicopter transfer service for seriously ill children, is ramping up its fundraising activities over the next few months and JHP Employability learners, and Simon Le Bon, are getting right behind the cause.

It's only the start of what both the charity and JHP Group hope will be a long-term relationship, but already JHP learners are rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in to a range of support activities. Natasha Hannon, TCAA Fundraising Manager, recently visited JHP Employability's Birmingham office to drum up support and get as many learners engaging in Foundation Learning (FL) provision on board as she could.

Her presentation not only explained what the charity is and what it hopes to achieve, but also how our learners could use the skills they're developing during their Foundation Learning and Employability activities to help raise both awareness and funds for the charity. And they've responded brilliantly, according to Natasha. "Their reaction has been great and it's a real

opportunity for them to put their newly-developed skills to use in aid of a good cause," she said.

Putting skills to valuable use

Already, the JHP Employability Birmingham office has encouraged its FL learners to use their literacy skills to increase the charity's profile through creating press releases to distribute to local media and develop letters that can be sent to potential fundraisers. They're also raising awareness of collection dates for contributions to stock the charity's shops, and ultimately, hope to carry out work placements in those shops as well.

TCAA uses Social Media to great effect in its activities and has encouraged

JHP's learners to do the same. So, they've been using facebook and other platforms to spread the good word about TCAA and keep an informal record of their activities by uploading photos and sharing them with their peers as a record of all that they've achieved.

And in the real world, they're doing their bit too. They've started a tuckshop, so when they get a hankering for something sweet to snack on all of the profits go to TCAA - £40 has been raised so far - and they've even put a donations box in the office so that all of their small change goes to the charity as well.

Festive fundraising

In the run up to Christmas they intend to take advantage of the festive

shopping rush by carrying out a street collection. With all of these activities up and running they're really confident that by the time Christmas comes around they'll have raised more than £400, which is enough to buy a flight suit for one of the charity's air ambulance medics.

Operating out of Baginton Airport, near Coventry, TCAA held a launch day at the start of November and guest of honour was Duran Duran frontman Simon Le Bon, the charity's Ambassador. The event was a soaraway success, pulled a huge crowd and went a long way towards raising the TCAA's profile, both locally and nationally, something JHP Group hopes to emulate as the relationship develops.

“ It isn't very often that a big organisation like JHP Group gets the chance to play such a big part in getting a charity off the ground. Although it's early days, we hope that our relationship with JHP Group will go from strength to strength and make a real difference to the children we aim to help. ”

Natasha Hannon, TCAA Fundraising Manager



Natasha Hannon



Want to find out more?

If you'd like to learn more about TCAA or get involved with fundraising activities, give **Natasha** a call on:



07584 673 183



Natasha.Hannon@theairambulanceservice.org.uk



JHP Group helping to support UK Digital Agenda

The UK Government is firmly committed to pushing through its 'Digital Agenda', which will see more and more public services being offered online. Over the next four years, for instance, plans to replace multiple benefits with one 'universal credit' for recipients will rely heavily on the use of online channels to deliver cost savings and provide easier access for claimants.

And it isn't just the Government that's taking advantage of online channels. More and more jobs, training resources and learning opportunities are being advertised or completed online, so the need for IT skills is more pressing than ever before.

JHP Training is aware of the issue and is providing resources to ensure that its learners gain the IT skills they will need to successfully engage with online opportunities and improve their career prospects. We're fully aware that up-to-date IT skills are now more of a necessity than a luxury and realise that without them, our existing and prospective clients will be significantly disadvantaged.

Bridging the 'digital divide'

Without access to online services and the skills to effectively use ICT technologies people without computer skills face two barriers. They can't access many of the resources that would help them in their job search activities: online job sites, CV resources and training opportunities to boost their skills, etc and they're also disadvantaged when it comes to accessing public services and benefits.

According to the 2009 Economic Case for Digital Inclusion report:

- 1 in 4 adults in the UK have never used the Internet
- 1/3 of UK households have no Internet access
- 49% of those without Internet access are in the lowest socio-economic group
- 38% of unemployed people aren't online.

Since the beginning of 2012 IT skills have become an integral element of our Work Programme activities. All JHP learners are trained in the sort of skills that will enable them to access online resources and exhibit the computer

skills that employers increasingly demand and are becoming essential in order to access a range of government and local authority resources.

Delivering transferable skills

Work Programme clients, for instance, receive IT training in a JHP centre that's designed to give them transferable skills and qualifications. At entry level the training focuses on basic computer skills, how to use email, search the Internet safely and operate word processing packages.

Once they've achieved competence in the basics they can progress on to a Level 2 qualification. This equips them with skills across the Microsoft Office Suite. So they learn how to create PowerPoint presentations, manipulate Excel spreadsheets and get to grips with Outlook, Publisher and Access.

Clients are given access to the technology when they need it. Of course, they receive advice and training during their job club activities, but they're also able to access the technology whenever they need it. So if they want to search online for a job or

training opportunity, work on their CV or even just get in touch with their local authority, they are able to get online in a JHP centre when they need to.

JHP Group has a strong belief in the value of IT skills and is doing all it can to ensure that our learners can take advantage of the opportunities the online space offers now and into the future.

case study →

Marguerite Beier

- ➔ learndirect IT Skills Course
- ➔ Secured job as Warehouse Operative

IT skills lift Marguerite out of a low ebb

Marguerite's first contact with JHP Employability was the result of an unhappy accident. She'd just lost her job and was trying to find a firm that was supposed to help her with her CV, but couldn't track it down. In a state of obvious distress and unable to stop crying, Marguerite arrived at JHP Employability's Burnley office – and things began to take a turn for the better.

The staff quickly gained her trust and she signed up for a Doing Effective Job Search (DEJS) module and attended the resource centre to work on her CV, cover letters and job applications. It became obvious that Marguerite's IT skills were below par, so she enrolled on the **learndirect** IT skills course.

Showing admirable determination and commitment, Marguerite achieved all of the objectives that had been set for her. She passed the IT course and stepped up her job search activities with new-found confidence, enthusiasm and a range of IT skills that she hoped would prove attractive to prospective employers.

Hard work pays off

And they did. Marguerite started a full-time job at the end of September packing, processing and ensuring the timely despatch of orders in a local warehouse. Quite an achievement in an area of high unemployment and proof, if proof was needed, of the value of IT skills in today's job market.



"I can't thank JHP Employability enough for everything, including all the help, advice and support they've given me, especially in the early days when I was in bits," said Marguerite. "Special thanks should go out to Paul for his encouragement and patience in getting me through the IT course."

Paul Sanders, her Job Coach, said: "There is a stark difference between the person who walked through our doors and the one that left with an IT qualification and a job. When Marguerite first came to us she had low self esteem and felt her whole world was caving in around her. Through spending time here, Marguerite built on her confidence and acquired new IT skills, thus expanding her expectations."

"I can't thank JHP Employability enough for everything, including all the help, advice and support they've given me, especially in the early days when I was in bits."

Marguerite Beier



Radical new plans to the way that Level 3 and above training for the over 24s is funded have been announced by the Government. The new 24+ Advanced Learning Loans (24+ALL) are set to replace Government grants that currently cover the cost of tuition for eligible learners on or after 1 August 2013.

The new system will operate like existing student loans and will be administered by the Student Loans Company. Any learner that takes out a 24+ALL won't have to repay the money until they're earning more than £21,000 and repayments will be set at a maximum of 9% of income over the £21,000 threshold. For learners below the age of 24, or those studying for qualifications below Level 3, the current grant provision will remain in place and there won't be a requirement to pay back any costs.

The Government is introducing a package of measures to ensure adult learners and those from vulnerable groups can take advantage of the new system. The National Careers Service will provide additional advice and guidance for adult learners and a £50 million bursary fund is being

established to help with any additional costs, such as childcare, that learners may incur.

Learners progressing to higher education after taking out a 24+ALL will have their loans rolled into one and will only be liable for a single monthly payment once they've reached the earning threshold. If the 24+ loan was taken out for an Access to HE Diploma, however, the 24+ loan will be written off on completion of their higher education course.

The Government points to evidence that people with higher qualifications benefit significantly in the long-term and that 74% of people polled by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) said they would still consider doing a course following the introduction of loans.

Although the way funding is delivered is changing, the amount of funding available for training the over 24s will stay the same. JHP Group will be monitoring the situation closely and ensuring that once the changes come into force, we'll be well-positioned to provide access to the training opportunities that we know can have a life-changing effect on our clients.



case study



David Palmer

David's customer focus recognised in national award shortlist

David Palmer is no stranger to the world of customer care – he's had a long career providing first-class service since 1976. So it's no surprise that he's been nominated for the **Hospitality Guild's Intermediate Apprentice of the Year Award 2012** for the high standard of work he's producing in his current role as a receptionist at the Red Lion Hotel in Salisbury.

Although he originally worked in a customer-facing role in a builder's merchant, when he moved into the hospitality sector, as a Hall Porter initially, he still had one eye on interacting directly with customers to put his experience to good use. As soon as he moved to reception he signed up for the Hospitality Services Intermediate Apprenticeship with JHP Training and he hasn't looked back since.

Getting his priorities right

David's number one priority are the guests. He's committed to delivering efficient and timely service to every client and is more than happy to go the extra mile to provide an optimum customer experience. He's clearly passionate about his work and his positive attitude rubs off on other members of staff and visitors to the hotel.

Age is obviously no barrier to learning, from David's perspective. Even though he's in his 50s and lacked access to a computer or the Internet, he overcame these barriers to progress rapidly through his qualification. He had to use his Assessor's computer to complete his first NVQ, the Certificate in Hospitality and Catering Principles, yet despite this inconvenience, he was successful and said he was 'overwhelmed' at achieving his first formal qualification.

"It is never too late to learn new things," David said. "I have worked for a number of years in this industry and still feel I have a lot to learn and improve on. I feel sure that this NVQ will help me and I will gain a good qualification at the end of the course."

Setting an example

David's now a key member of the Red Lion hospitality team and his achievements and hard work are really appreciated by his colleagues. As his confidence has grown his enthusiasm has proved to be a real example to his peers. He's seen as proof that you're never too old to learn and his achievements have helped inspire other team members to develop their own skills.

Matthew Greenwood, David's Duty Manager at the Red Lion said: "Seeing and supporting David has always been a pleasure. His positive can-do attitude, despite technical set backs, is infectious and has been key to the achievements he has gained. Seeing the affect his customer service skills have on customers is testament to his commitment to the industry."

"This is a great advert for the work JHP is doing in hospitality. In little more than 12 months in the sector we've managed to get an apprentice shortlisted for such a prestigious award – let's hope it's the first of many."

Gareth James, JHP Group Operations Director



JHP Group to deliver innovative Funeralcare Apprenticeships

In the Summer edition of Voice we told you about how JHP Group had branched out to offer its first Apprenticeships in the dental sector. Well, in another innovative move, we're delighted to announce that JHP Group has now begun working in the funeral industry. We're joining forces with The Co-Operative Funeralcare to deliver a complete learning package - from Foundation Learning and Funeral Operations & Services Apprenticeships to Management Apprenticeships.

The Co-operative Apprenticeship Academy with JHP began recruiting its first 10 apprentices earlier in the year, receiving a massive 1,671 applications via the The Co-operative's careers portal. JHP and Simon from The Co-operative Apprenticeship Academy used open days, telephone interviews, assessment centres and face-to-face interviews to whittle down the final stage applicants, who were then interviewed by the hiring managers.

We're already helping some of the prospective apprentices complete Foundation Learning in preparation for their apprenticeships. We'll begin delivering the apprenticeships across the North East, North West and Yorkshire & Humber before the end of the year, with a national roll out commencing in 2013. In the first year alone, we're looking to train around 350 apprentices!

Higher standards of training to match customer needs

The Co-operative Funeralcare acknowledges that customer demands are changing, with expectations of a high level of service. Going forward, they needed to improve their employee's skills and knowledge with an apprenticeship, so that their service was supported by a framework of approved standards. Until now staff assessments were not recognised on the Qualifications and Credit Framework and most training offered was on the job.

It's incredibly important that staff are trained to a recognised high standard, as the customer service, care and empathy they provide makes a huge difference to families and friends at such a difficult time in their lives.

The revolutionary new Apprenticeships originally proposed by The Co-operative Apprenticeship Academy finally offers a more appealing, structured career path for tomorrow's Funeral industry professionals.

Two levels of Funeral Operations and Services Apprenticeships will be on offer:

The Intermediate Funeral Operations and Services Apprenticeship is designed for individuals working within a funeral business as a Funeral Operative or Funeral Arranger. The qualifications enable apprentices in more specialist roles, such as Funeral bearers or drivers, to develop their skills and knowledge.

The Advanced Apprenticeship in Funeral Operations and Services has been developed for those working in other positions, such as a Funeral Director. It ensures that apprentices complete competence-based qualifications appropriate to their current skills and job role.

It helps to ensure that learners can maintain sensitive working relationships as well as manage and co-ordinate the funeral processes effectively.

This pathway also provides a progression route for employees who have achieved a Level 2 apprenticeship in Funeral Operations and Services and aspire to progress to director level within the funeral sector.



Delivering long-term opportunities

The Co-operative's Group Chief Executive, Peter Marks, explained why Apprenticeships are vital to the success of their business:

"We believe businesses have a real responsibility to help motivate and

inspire young people by giving them new opportunities to gain the skills, knowledge and experiences to be pioneers for their generation.

"Back in the 1960's, at the age of 17, I got my first job at my local Co-op store and today, 43 years later, I am running what has now become the largest consumer-owned Co-operative in the world.

"Through our new Apprenticeship Academy, we are offering young people across the UK proper jobs with qualifications and real career opportunities."

Neil Tamplin, Operations Director and funeral industry sector lead for JHP said: "Our partnership with The Co-operative Group continues to go from strength to strength and I'm delighted that it has chosen JHP Group to deliver these truly groundbreaking Funeralcare Apprenticeships. This sector has long been crying out for a programme of nationally recognised qualifications, so I'm confident take-up will be high. I'm also excited that next year we'll start offering the Apprenticeships nationally, which will mean hundreds of employees will benefit from higher training standards that will equip them well for long-term careers within the industry."

A word or two from the Apprentices

"You'll receive valuable knowledge and skills as a Co-operative apprentice"
Leah Millin

"Applying for this position seemed like a natural thing for me to do. Having suffered a recent bereavement I realised how important a role is played by the funeral industry. I knew that I wanted a career in the industry, but felt I didn't stand a chance, until a friend asked me 'Why not apply for The Co-operative Funeralcare apprenticeship?' Since starting my apprenticeship I've

had lots of on-the-job training and I'm working towards my NVQ in Funeral Directing meaning I'm gaining a real awareness and understanding of the importance of the funeral industry. I'm improving my social skills and confidence and developing the maturity that you need to be able to offer a first class service to our customers in this industry. **Antonino Alfonso**



"This is such a unique opportunity"
Antonino

About The Co-operative Apprenticeship Academy

The Co-operative Group launched The Apprenticeship Academy on the 9 June 2011 and is providing 2,000 jobs over the next three years. The £9 million academy offers young people transferrable skills, competitive salaries and qualifications - not just a job. It is The Co-operative's vision that eventually all new under 25 recruits will be part of the Academy.



For more information, or to view the Apprenticeships that are currently available, visit www.co-operative.jobs

JHP Group provides a range of services to the The Co-operative Group, including Banking, Pharmacy, Supply Chain, Legal, Head office and Childcare.

Holt Review findings

The Holt Review: 'Making apprenticeships more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises' was published at the end of August 2012 and it has plenty to say about how SME take-up of Apprenticeships can be increased.



Schools and online channels are part of the solution

Holt believes that a multi-faceted approach has the best chance of improving awareness. In his view, schools have an important part to play and called for much more employer/apprentice engagement with schools, particularly in years 7 to 13 to highlight apprenticeships as a career path.

Holt recommends that an 'online virtual community of apprentices' could be created to celebrate and promote apprenticeships and incentivise more people to take them up. If this was combined with similar online resources it would help employers much more easily "identify and access the most appropriate apprenticeship training provision for their needs in real time."

Employers need to get involved too

Employers are critically important as far as Holt is concerned. They should be involved in developing "their own training provision through working with providers and others to design apprenticeships that address skills shortages quickly and effectively, without reducing quality."

Effective collaboration between all parties involved in apprenticeships is essential if SMEs are to increase the levels of apprentice take up. He calls for the "Government to review the delivery landscape to ensure that roles and responsibilities between the many parts of Government and related agencies involved in apprenticeships are clear, coherent and optimal."

And there's a healthy appetite for such involvement, according to Holt. He suggests that the NAS should "build on the offers of help made by Review consultees to develop a network of SMEs who can act as mentors to SME

businesses new to apprenticeships and champions of the apprenticeships programme."

Reaction to the Review

Dr Adam Marshall, Director of Policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, acknowledged the value of apprenticeships and called for decisive Government action. "Employers will expect a swift implementation of the practical recommendations contained in the Holt Review. Businesses want to support young people's transition from education to work, and there must be a greater focus from ministers on delivering a skills system that is responsive to the needs of the economy," he said.

Robert Downes, speaking on behalf of the Forum of Private Business (FPB) said: "The best way for SMEs to learn more about apprenticeships is through engagement with the relevant stakeholders. We also think that there does need to be a better relationship between local learning providers and employers. Not only would this mean employers know more about the types of courses on offer, but it will allow learning providers to know more about the types of skills shortage there are locally. This would create a more targeted approach."

John Walker, National Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses, said: "There has been so much change to the apprenticeship system in England over the last 30 years that small firms really don't know how to access an apprenticeship or what they'll get at the end of it. This is a missed opportunity. The status of apprenticeships needs to vastly increase in the eyes of young people, schools, parents and employers. Apprenticeships need to be seen as of equal value to academic routes into the workplace."

JHP & Tesco CSC – the partnership that brings results

The partnership between JHP Group and Tesco Customer Service Centre (CSC), Dundee began back in April 2010 after a 'one-off' large employer funding initiative awarded by Skills Development Scotland (SDS).



It was a large contract for JHP Group in Scotland, with Tesco submitting the names of 221 staff keen to complete a Modern Apprenticeship (MA). Through initial consultations it quickly became apparent that a truly successful working partnership could only be achieved if both parties fully understood each other's working practices and maintained a flexible approach.

With this in mind we created a bespoke programme for Tesco CSC and took the decision to roll the programme out over a period of 18 months. This would help to ensure minimum disruption to Tesco working requirements and add maximum value for the learners. Consideration was given to storecard launches, trading patterns and seasonal impact

JHP Group assigned dedicated assessors to ensure continuity and a thorough understanding of client needs and expectations. This approach ensured the partnership was more efficient for Tesco and the learners themselves.

Contract review meetings and monthly client reports continue so that both parties can track learner successes and make changes where necessary. The partnership also jointly explores the viability of new funding opportunities, the relevance of these funding opportunities to Tesco CSC, and how they may be realised.

What are the benefits of taking on an Apprentice?

Tangible business benefits cited for Tesco CSC include:

- Increased productivity
- Improved teamwork
- Enhanced learner confidence
- Easier recognition of ability and potential
- Reduced staff attrition and staff turnover
- Reduced absence rates from apprentices

Tesco has since identified further staff hoping to complete an MA and is extending this opportunity to new staff intakes. Interest remains strong and we continue to explore joint opportunities to support young people into employment in line with a joint commitment towards supporting local communities and forward planning for future generations.

Nicki Gautier-Hughes, HR Project/Talent Manager for Tesco, said: "Offering our people the chance to get these qualifications has proven so successful that we've recently taken the decision to offer staff at our sister site in Cardiff a similar opportunity with NVQ qualifications."

In an effort to maintain the momentum built by recent successes, JHP Group has included a further bid on Tesco CSC's behalf for next year's funding allocation. Both parties are really keen to sustain the MA programme, in the hope that this opportunity can at some point be offered to all staff, in line with the Equal Opportunities approach of both parties.

A massive thank you goes out to everyone who has been instrumental

in making the partnership a success – you know who you are! It's been so successful that we even made it into the top three in the Scottish Training Federation (STF) Success in Partnership award for 2012. We now have our sights firmly set on winning this award in 2013. Watch this space!



So, what do the Apprentices say?

We asked a couple of apprentices for their views now that they've completed their Apprenticeships:

"What struck me when completing it was the amount of knowledge I have gained, how much of it I can use in my current role and the amount of coaching I do. That feeling of pride and self recognition stays with me and after speaking to my colleagues it's obvious that they mirror my feelings."

"I would recommend that everyone does a Modern Apprenticeship and I would certainly look to do another one." *Simon*

"The course is easy to understand and tailored to the kind of job I am doing. I would advise anyone working in a call centre to do this qualification if given the chance." *Angie*



"I don't intend to go to University because I'd prefer to learn on the job and earn a wage. I've picked up some good ideas from the show and JHP look like they've got some great opportunities."

Delilah



World Skills 2012

"The event was a great success and was packed with people from start to finish – with more than 100,000 visitors in all. We really enjoyed talking to visitors to the stand and helping them see their future career using our interactive photo panels. Everyone had a fantastic time at the event and we are looking forward to exhibiting again at The Skills Show 2013!"

Jenny Hall,
JHP Group event organiser



"The JHP prospectus had some really interesting information in it and the lady we spoke to on the stand was very helpful. I'd like to do a Business Administration Apprenticeship eventually because it's a skill that can be applied to any industry."

Rebecca



"It's been a great experience and given me a much better idea of what my options are. I'm going to take a proper look at the JHP Prospectus on the bus home."

Samantha





Each year learning providers, employers, voluntary organisations and charities, amongst others, nominate individuals and projects for the highly coveted Adult Learners' Week Awards. Nominations for the 2013 Awards are now open for individuals and projects across England that have used learning to transform their lives.

Get your nominations in for Adult Learner's Week Awards 2013

The awards offer the ideal platform for us to celebrate our outstanding achievements and highlight the impact that JHP Group's provision has to offer, as well as encouraging other adults to get back into learning. Nominating an outstanding learner will boost their self-confidence and turn them into a role model that will inspire others to follow suit.

There are a range of exciting new national award categories for you to nominate learners and projects for, including learning for work, family and community, art, technology and life skills. There are also award categories for young adults and senior learners. Details about the awards, eligibility information and guidance notes are all available on the Adult Learners' Week website, www.alw.org.uk where you can also find inspirational videos from some of the previous award winners.

If anyone from within JHP Group would like to nominate a learner they've worked with, we urge you to do so. If you feel that your writing skills let you down, have no fear, your marketing department is here!


For those of you that aren't budding writers, once you've completed your application you can send it to us to give it the once over. We can't promise we'll make you a winner, but we will get the most out of your inspirational stories and also proofread your submission to minimise the chance of grammatical/spelling errors. Email: communications@jhp-group.com

So come on, let's shout about the fantastic work we're doing - get your nominations in now!

The easiest way to make a nomination is by completing and submitting the online form available from www.alw.org.uk. Nominations close at 5pm, Thursday 13 December 2012.

 www.alw.org.uk

 communications@jhp-group.com

 Follow Adult Learners' Week activity on Twitter using the hashtag **#ALW13**



JHP Group retains ISO accreditation

We're pleased to announce that JHP Group has been re-certified against BS EN ISO 9001:2008 quality management standard.

The Lloyds Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) Assessor had no hesitation in recommending JHP Group for re-certification, noting many process improvements and being unable to find any deficiencies.

A huge thank you goes out to all the staff teams who were very accommodating and supportive of our ISO accreditation during the assessor visits. Assessments were conducted at Birmingham, Stoke and Newmarket Skills Business Centres; Stoke and Gloucester Employability Business Centres and also across all HQ Departments.

And in other news, JHP's commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace has recently been acknowledged with the award of 'Two Ticks' accreditation, which indicates that we're 'Positive about Disabled People.'



The final word

I work in the Marketing Department and it's proved to be a really interesting and fulfilling place to learn my trade. Initially, I got involved in the simple, but really important, tasks associated with marketing, like proofreading and spell-checking copy, amending artwork, managing inventory and stock-taking. I got a real feel for what JHP Group's all about and it gave me the chance to put skills I already had, like manipulating spreadsheets and creating PowerPoint presentations to good use.

At the same time I studied for my Business Administration Intermediate Apprenticeship. I found it really enjoyable and it helped with some of the tasks I had to complete in my role, but I genuinely believe that the professional skills I was picking up while working in the department were just as important: learning how to communicate with people, acting in a professional manner and building my marketing knowledge.

Year two of my Apprenticeship has been much more strategic and analytical. I now have a much better appreciation of how the day-to-day tasks I complete impact the marketing function in the long-term. Now that I've completed my Intermediate Apprenticeship and moved on to an Advanced Apprenticeship I'm learning even more and getting the chance to contribute in many more areas.

I'm now involved in the planning and running of marketing events, creating presentations and handling Excel spreadsheets and databases at a much more advanced level. I'm also getting much more involved in the design and print side of things, I designed an appointment card from scratch, for instance and I was really pleased with the finished product. Closer involvement in the department's activities has also made me feel much more confident and I'm now liaising directly with printers, keeping an eye on costs, artwork changes and budgets.

I'm lucky to get the chance to gain hands-on marketing experience and as my responsibilities have increased I've begun to feel like a real part of the team. And I'm not finished with the learning yet. I intend to complete a Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) qualification as soon as I can to give me a more marketing-focused qualification.

My Apprenticeship at JHP Group has been fantastic and a really good stepping stone for a long-term career. Without the Apprenticeship I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now. I've gained so much experience and it's set me up for, what I hope will be, a successful marketing career.



Help your students with their career options

You can help your students discover an alternative route to long-term career success with the JHP Group Prospectus. It's packed with information that will help them evaluate alternatives to university after full-time compulsory education and will provide them with a clear overview of what vocational training is all about.

Inside they'll learn about entry requirements, the practical tasks involved and the support we can provide for basic employability skills, CV writing and interview techniques.

**View our
electronic
prospectus!**



So take a look at what's on offer by visiting:



www.jhptraining.com/ebook/index.html