

Press release: Network established to encourage diversity in apprenticeships

The Department for Education (DfE) has today (21 February 2017) announced that a group of employers have come together to help promote diversity within apprenticeships.

The Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) is comprised of 23 employers, including Rolls Royce, BBC, BAE Systems and a number of small- and medium-sized employers.

The network has been established to champion apprenticeships and diversity amongst employers and encourage more people from underrepresented groups, including those with disabilities, women and members of the black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, to consider apprenticeships.

It will support the government's commitment, as part of its ['2020 vision'](#), to increase the proportion of apprenticeship starts by people from BAME backgrounds by 20% by 2020.

Nus Ghani MP has been appointed as chair of the network, and will be responsible for setting and shaping the network's objectives as well as working alongside the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), who played a key role in recruiting the 23 employers to the ADCN.

Skills and Apprenticeships Minister Robert Halfon said:

I am passionate about ensuring that everyone, no matter their background or age, can use apprenticeships to get on the ladder of opportunity to a successful career.

Although last year saw record numbers of people with a disability or from disadvantaged backgrounds start on a high-quality apprenticeship, we need to do much more. That is why it is vital that so many diverse employers have come together to pledge to do more to ensure apprenticeships are truly open to everyone.

I am also extremely pleased that we are announcing Nus Ghani as the chair – with her knowledge, commitment and expertise, I am sure she will do a brilliant job in making sure apprenticeships can work for as many people as possible.

Chair of the Apprenticeships Diversity Championships Network, Nus Ghani MP said:

An apprenticeship can be the first step to a life-enhancing career. It can open up opportunities, provide inspiration and allow someone

to develop skills which will carry them through life. In a competitive and challenging labour market, apprenticeships can be the way in for many people who might otherwise not have dared to dream that there was a fulfilling career path for them.

I am honoured to have been appointed by the Prime Minister as chair of the government's Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network. I am determined that anyone from anywhere, whatever their background and whatever their story, is able to access the life-changing opportunities that apprenticeships can offer.

The benefits of earning whilst you are learning, coupled with professional certification, will help enable apprentices to achieve a competitive edge in the labour market. Our whole society benefits when aspiration and opportunity is extended to all, and those benefits encompass the economy, community cohesiveness and national pride.

I will be ambitious for apprentices and challenge all industries, public and private, to deliver quality apprenticeships across the country. As the economy goes from strength to strength we need to ensure that opportunities are available to all. I will be scrupulous in ensuring that the Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network opens up career options and delivers much needed skills for our traditional and emerging industries.

Beyond the network, the government is working to ensure social mobility for all with a range of measures including implementing recommendations from a task force, led by Paul Maynard, which has focused on issues faced by people with disabilities.

The network will build on this to ensure more people with disabilities, people from BAME backgrounds and women in sectors where they are under-represented can take up apprenticeships.

Notes to editors

1) Nus Ghani

- was elected to Parliament in 2015 as the MP for Wealden in East Sussex
- chairs two all-party parliamentary groups (APPG): the APPG for Ageing and Older People and for Eye Health and Visual Impairment
- parliamentary representative for the Conservative Rural Affairs Group
- sits on the Home Affairs Select Committee
- Vice Chair of the APPGs on Thalidomide and on Women in Parliament and an Officer of the Domestic Violence and Counter-Extremism Groups
- selected to sit on the Armed Forces Bill Committee
- worked at the BBC World Service and for 2 charities

23 members of the network

- Bristol city council
- DiVA
- United Utilities
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Enterprise rentals Business Support
- Telematics Business Solutions Ltd
- Minority Business Engagement HUB
- BAE Systems
- Rolls Royce
- Ilyas Patel Accountancy Services
- The Atomic Weapons Establishment
- NG Bailey
- BBC
- Brighton & Hove city council
- Compass Group UK & Ireland Ltd
- Offer Moments
- Sunmark
- Balfour Beatty
- ISG
- Yorkshire Water
- Asda
- Kier Group
- Barclays

2) Figures show that in 2015 to 2016, 10.5% of those starting an apprenticeship were from a BAME background, that 52.8% of all apprenticeship starts were females and that 9.9% of the total starts were by people who declared a disability or learning difficulty (LDD).

3) Read the [Maynard Review recommendations](#).

4) The Get In Go Far campaign is designed to inform and inspire young people to consider apprenticeships as valid and credible routes to a rewarding career. It also aims to increase interest and demand from employers in running apprenticeship programmes. For more information visit [Get In Go Far](#).

Case study

Chris Achiampong, apprentice, IBM

Currently based in London, Chris works in the system sales team at IBM.

Chris sits on the board of trustees for the EY Foundation – a charity who inspire and engage young people across the UK who are disadvantaged in the labour market and to support entrepreneurs, from social entrepreneurs to start-ups, to develop and grow their businesses.

He is also one of the faces of the [Get In Go Far](#) campaign.

Blossom Hill, apprentice, BAE Systems

Blossom is an apprentice from BAE Systems' Military Air and Information

business at Brough, Humberside.

She recently won the title of BAE Systems' UK Apprentice of the Year 2016.

She was originally planning to go to university, but changed her mind after she heard about the opportunities available through apprenticeships at BAE.