

# Tameside Apprenticeship Strategy

2012-2015

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This publication acknowledges the initial work gathering employer, learner and stakeholder views on apprenticeships carried out by Tameside College in 2010. The resulting publication 'Tameside Apprenticeship Strategy' provides the foundation for this report.

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# Foreword

I believe that almost everybody in Tameside would agree that for a strong and growing local economy the borough needs a high level of skills to meet employer demand. And increasing the number and range of apprenticeships on offer, and ensuring their quality, is key to that growth. It is a top priority for Tameside and an essential part of the borough's Skills Strategy.

More local employers than ever are investing in apprenticeships as they see the added value apprentices bring to their organisation. Existing apprenticeship employers are able to develop their staff to a higher standard and attract the very best candidates to support improved productivity and performance. Other employers, new to apprenticeships, are discovering that the on the job training that apprenticeships offer allows them to respond flexibly to meet changing customer and business needs, and to meet future skills' capability requirements.

I particularly welcome, therefore, the public declaration of intent for apprenticeship growth contained in this Strategy. It offers a strong statement of support for those young people and adults who wish to take up an apprenticeship, and for those employers seeking workforce development. The contributing partners, agencies and stakeholders responsible for delivering growth will make every effort to drive the borough's apprenticeship ambitions forward.

The Apprenticeship Strategy calls for the creation of a sustainable apprenticeship programme in the borough, providing clear channels of both access and progression, and addressing the specific barriers preventing further growth in numbers and quality. Delivering this will rely on even closer links between Tameside's strategic partners – the employers, training providers, the National Apprenticeship Service and Tameside Council.

I am confident that this can be achieved, and our progress so far has been excellent. The message about apprenticeships in Tameside is clear to all: we know they work, employers know they work and apprentices know they work. Let us work together to provide more.



*Kieran Quinn*

**Councillor Kieran Quinn**  
Executive Leader, Tameside MBC



# Introduction and Background

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Tameside is located to the east side of the Greater Manchester metropolitan area, the country's second largest regional centre, and placed strategically between the city of Manchester and the Peak District. It combines a mix of urban and rural landscapes and the area includes historic market towns, a canal network and industrial heritage areas as well as new business parks, retail and leisure developments. Tameside has a population of 213,000 people - of which just over 134,000 (62.2%) are of working age.

The district benefits from the good connectivity offered by the M60 motorway, and railway links to the city centre and across the Pennines to Leeds and Sheffield. The extension of the Metrolink tram system will enhance transport links, with a plan to reach from the centre of the Greater Manchester conurbation into the heart of the borough by 2013/14.

As well as the difficulties resulting from the current economic downturn, Tameside continues to experience the long-term impacts of the downturn in manufacturing in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The borough has experienced significant challenges as a result, including a low skills base, a lack of replacement employment opportunities, low average incomes, significant pockets of poverty and deprivation, and lower standards of living for residents. The recent recession is forecast to have longer-term impact on Tameside, with employment not expected to return to pre-recession levels until the next decade.

A mixture of tough challenges and long-term economic issues will, therefore, face Tameside's residents and businesses in the foreseeable future. If Tameside's residents are to access economic opportunities, a significant increase in the number of appropriate jobs in the borough is essential.

Central to the new Economic Vision for the borough, therefore, is the need to develop opportunities for new business growth and to further improve the skills base of its residents. A better qualified workforce will be more attractive to employers and allow residents to access higher paid jobs.

The low skills base of the residents of Tameside is one of the major challenges. Additionally, those low skills levels have been persistent. This, coupled with the fact that better qualified residents have limited access to higher paid employment within the borough, means that much is needed to make the borough more economically attractive. An apprenticeship programme, with clear progression routes through to higher levels, is fundamental to achieve change.

There are encouraging features in the borough on which to make progress. A relatively large proportion of the population is economically active (2008/9 employment rate of 70.9%) providing a positive platform for the borough to build on. There have been improvements in economic dynamism, as measured by Ekosgen (2009). Educational trends, across all ages,

show sustained improvements in attainment levels, providing a foundation of young people well equipped to access further learning and training opportunities. More of those young people aged 16-19 are staying in education and training (86% 2009). Strong public, private and voluntary sector partnerships have demonstrated their capacity to work together to improve local outcomes – Tameside Business Family, Works First, Neighbourhood Partnerships, Tameside M60 Invest, and Tameside Strategic Partnership. Medium term growth is expected in finance, business and the distribution and hotels sectors. The Ashton Moss industrial development has been able to deliver larger scale, new build expansion that has proved attractive to employers.

Significantly, apprenticeship numbers are on the increase revealing the interest from both residents and employers.



# The National and Local Policy Context

Apprenticeships have a long and distinguished history. In recent years the Government has renewed its pledge to the programme being the primary route to delivering skills and employability growth. Their importance was underlined in the publication *'World Class Apprenticeships'*, (2009), which set new ambitions for apprenticeships and heralded the creation of a new fit-for-purpose organisation, the National Apprenticeship Service to deliver the apprenticeship agenda. Policy was strengthened further in *'Skills for Growth'* (2010). The government sees apprenticeships as bringing together individuals, who are motivated and working hard to develop themselves, with employers, who are investing in their own success but also supporting a programme of wider social, environmental and economic value. Government's role is to provide public funding and build the prestige and reputation of the programme.

Since that publication, the policy arena has been dynamic:

- The Specification for Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE), including minimum levels of guided learning hours for on- and off-the-job training
- A minimum wage for apprentices
- Minimum working hours for apprentices
- A single adult skills budget and further freedoms and flexibilities to support apprenticeship growth

- Access to Apprenticeships – a pathway programme to full apprenticeships
- An expansion of available adult apprenticeships to 75,000 by 2014/15, leading to more than 200,000 people starting an apprenticeship each year
- Increased government investment in apprenticeships by up to £250 million over three years, resulting in a commitment of £605 million in 2011-12 and an indicative budget of £648 million in 2012-13
- A stated ambition to reshape apprenticeships so that technician level – Level 3 – becomes the level to which learners and employers aspire
- To widen access, there will be clear progression routes from Advanced Apprenticeships to higher level skills, including Levels 4 and 5
- Apprenticeships are key to the commitment to raise the age of participation in education or training for all young people to 18 by 2015, with high-quality vocational training clearly recognised as a mainstream route. Apprenticeships need to be valued alongside university as a great option for young people who want the best jobs, the best careers and the best chance to get on in life.
- Moves to reduce bureaucracy and red tape for employers, and to simplify funding arrangements

Regionally, Greater Manchester's partnership approach, delivered through the Combined Authorities framework, has given similar commitment to apprenticeship growth as a means of delivering economic prosperity to the region and its residents. A sub-regional apprenticeship action plan promises to deliver an ambitious target of one in four of the employed population engaged on an apprenticeship by 2020.

Tameside's future links inextricably with the future of Greater Manchester and the Council supports this target: it has additionally proposed to strengthen its commitment to its young people by promising to deliver this level of apprenticeship participation by 2015. The Prosperous Tameside Delivery Board, a key component of the Tameside Strategic Partnership, similarly views apprenticeship growth as central to delivery of its Skills Strategy. Members of that Partnership, consisting of influential private, public and community sectors, will ensure that organisations from all sectors work together to create an economic environment where people and businesses thrive.

# Dianne Hanson

## Pride of Tameside Business Apprentice of the year award winner

She's already proven her mettle as one of the UK's top accountancy trainees, but that hasn't stopped Dianne Hanson from wanting more.

Learning on the job by combining her work at Lewis & Co Accountants, Mossley, with her studies has given her the tools for success. To prove it, she has already come top in the whole country in the International Association of Bookkeepers' exam at Tameside College as part of her AAT level Two Apprenticeship.

She said: "I was very surprised but pleased. I work hard with my studies and also in work. Working at the same time as studying allows me to apply the theory I learn in college to real life situations, so I learn quickly and understand the profession better."

Dianne passed the whole of her level two course with flying colours and is now coming to the end of level three as she works her way to the top of the profession. She hopes to take the level four exams soon, which will enable her to become a qualified accounting technician.

But for Dianne that's not enough. She wants to become a chartered accountant.

"Dianne's timekeeping and attendance is exemplary. Any new tasks are dealt with professionally and always returned promptly. She is a pleasure to work with."



# Apprenticeships in Tameside

## Why Develop An Apprenticeship Strategy for Tameside?

Nationally, apprenticeships exist in over 80 different skill sectors with 200 different frameworks available, ranging from the construction and building trades to creativity and games design; business and financial services to engineering; health and social care to travel and tourism services. In short, virtually every employment sector in the borough is covered by an apprenticeship. The ambition, therefore, is to ensure that framework availability is in place to meet explicit employer requirements.

The apprenticeship programme in Tameside has undergone a renaissance in the past few years, and there is growing evidence of collective momentum from both employers and learners to continue with this level of engagement. The available data confirms that the borough has made an encouraging start to growing the number of apprenticeships with generally positive trends across all age ranges and programme levels.

**Table 1: Tameside Apprenticeship Starts - Resident Numbers by Age**

Age	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
16-18	665	678	559	820
19-24	330	354	286	396
Adult (25+)	-	55	210	250

(Source: NAS data 2011)

In most cases, local increases have outstripped both Greater Manchester and national performance. The number of Intermediate Apprenticeship starts has significantly increased following limited performance in 2008-09. Starts for 16-18 year olds, however, are concentrated across a small number of frameworks, including Business and Administration, Active Leisure and Learning, and Construction. Under representation by gender, ethnic minorities and those with learning difficulties and disabilities continue to be issues in Tameside.

**Table 2: Tameside Apprenticeship completions\* - Percentages by Age Range**

Age	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
16-18	62.2%	56%	73.5%	53.4%
19-24	70.2%	49.2%	74%	55.5%
Adult (25+)	50%	10.9%	32.8%	55.2%

\*as measured by 'starts' against notified completions - rates will vary depending on the length of the apprenticeship period, particularly for adults

Apprenticeship success rates are improving year on year. Successful completions are a measure of quality: evidence that the framework has met the needs of both the learner and of the employer. They are also testimony to a strong partnership amongst learner, employer and training providers.



# Apprenticeships in Tameside

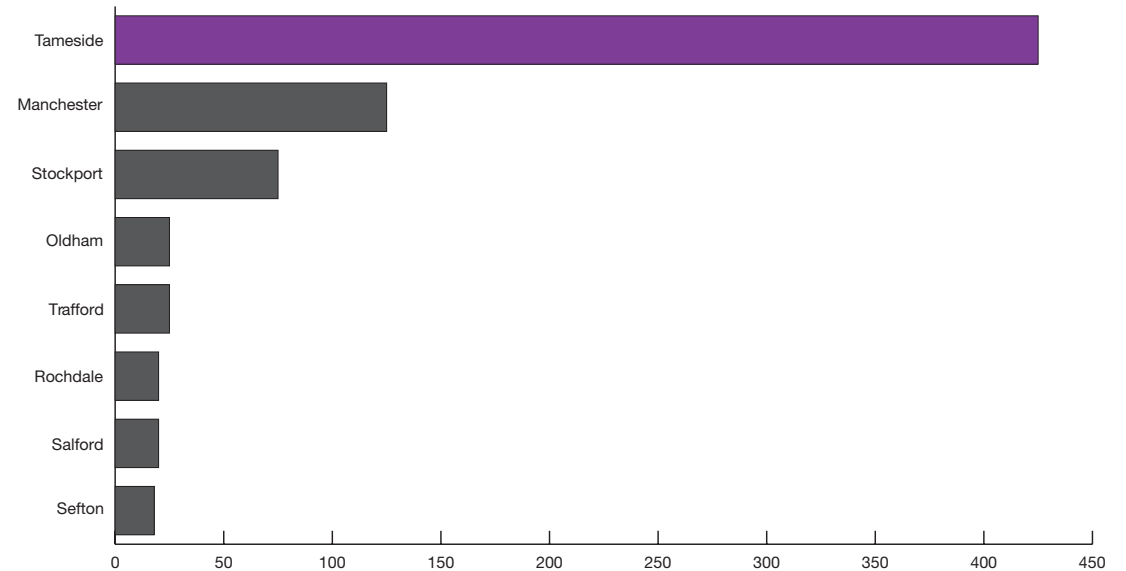
**Table 3: Tameside Apprenticeship Starts:  
- Percentages by Age and Programme Level**

Age	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	L2	L3	L2	L3	L2	L3	L2	L3
16-18	76%	24	75	25	77	23	84	16
16-18 GM	76%	24	77	23	75	25	79	21
19-24	57%	43	56	44	61	39	70	30
19-24 GM	58%	42	57	43	60	40	65	35
Adult (25+)	0.27%	0.60	4.4	4.8	17.1	19.0	12.0	23.5

(Source: NAS data 2011)

There is growing demand for apprenticeships from Tameside's residents, many of whom are prepared to travel outside the borough's boundaries to access good quality programmes. Taking up an apprenticeship is becoming a more attractive offer to young people but too few are accessing Higher Level programmes. However, there is still considerable distance to travel to achieve the 1 in 4 target for the borough.

**Table 4: Travel to Apprenticeship Learning Pattern**



(Source: NAS data 2011)

The above chart shows the areas Tameside residents (*only for 6 or more*) travel to for their learning. Clearly, local provision is attractive, and the demand is high.

# Apprenticeships in Tameside

Table 5: Tameside Top Ten Sectors

Rank	16-18			19-24			25+		
	Framework	LA %	NW %	Framework	LA %	NW %	Framework	LA %	NW %
1	Active Leis & Learning	13.66%	7.42%	Customer Service	18.56%	13.95%	Management	18%	12.77%
2	Bus Admin	11.10%	10.26%	Retail	11.37%	9.02%	Customer Service	18%	22.72%
3	Construction	9.02%	9.63%	Bus Admin	10.20%	9.75%	Bus Admin	16%	13.36%
4	Child Care Learn & Dev	8.66%	9.95%	Hospitality & Catering	7.53%	10.81%	Health & Social Care	9%	11.71%
5	Vehicle Maint. & Repair	7.93%	4.60%	Child Care Learn & Dev	6.19%	5.94%	Retail	8%	6.33%
6	Customer Service	7.68%	5.93%	Contact Centres	5.69%	1.99%	Hosp. & Catering	8%	6.82%
7	Hairdressing	7.44%	9.94%	Accountancy	5.35%	4.12%	Warehousing & Storage	4%	1.04%
8	Retail	5.37%	2.58%	Health & Social Care	4.01%	6.76%	Child Care Learn & Dev	4%	1.83%
9	Health & Social Care	3.17%	3.89%	Construction	4.01%	4.43%	Accountancy	3%	3.18%
10	Engineering	3.17%	6.08%	Active Leis & Learning	3.18%	4.46%	Sales & Telesales	2%	1.01%
	<b>Top Ten Total</b>	77.20%	70.29%	<b>Top Ten Total</b>	76.09%	71.23%	<b>Top Ten Total</b>	88.80%	80.77%
	<b>All 16-18 Starts</b>	100.00%		<b>All 19-24 Starts</b>	100.00%		<b>All 25+ Starts</b>	100.00%	

(Source: NAS data 2011)

# Apprenticeships Explained

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Apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes that enable the apprentice to earn a wage whilst gaining on-the-job experience and skills that lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

Apprenticeships are available at three levels:

- Intermediate Apprenticeship (Level 2) – on completion this is equivalent to 5 A\* – C GCSEs
- Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3) – on completion this is equivalent to 2 A-Levels
- Higher Apprenticeships – on completion this is equivalent to a foundation degree

All apprenticeships are contained within a Framework devised by employers which includes:

- An appropriate work-based qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at either Level 2, 3 or 4
- Functional or Key Skills qualifications, e.g. working in teams, problem-solving, communication and using new technology and numbers effectively
- A technical qualification such as a BTEC or City & Guilds (as relevant to the specific apprenticeship)
- Other additional statutory qualifications or requirements as specified by the particular occupation (e.g. COSH or other operational safety qualifications)

- Employee rights and responsibilities - apprentices are required to gain a general understanding of the rights and responsibilities of workers (including equal opportunities legislation)
- Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) assessment and recognition - All six skills must be achieved and evidenced by the apprentice as part of the framework requirements

These nationally recognised qualifications give the apprentice transferable skills and the modular style of delivery enables the apprentice to achieve milestones throughout the apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships have no set duration, as the time taken will depend on the ability of the apprentice and the employer's requirements. On average, an Intermediate Apprenticeship will take approximately one year to complete, an Advanced Apprenticeship 12 to 18 months, and a Higher Apprenticeship up to two years. All apprentices are employees, in real jobs, and therefore need to be work ready before starting.

Apprentices earn while they learn and the minimum pay from employers is about £2.60 per hour, working a minimum of 30 hours. However, the most recent survey showed that on average apprentices earn much higher. Salaries vary and can be dependent on sector, age of apprentice and apprenticeship level. As an employee,

the apprentice receives the same benefits as other employees. Government funding for the organisation delivering the training (a training provider) is available but varies – currently, for 16-18 year olds there is no employer contribution required.

Most of the apprentice's training takes place in the workplace but study for technical and functional/key skills qualifications can be at a local college or a specialist training provider. This can be completed on day release or in a block, although full on-the-job training is becoming more popular. Apprentices have a mentor to support them at work, ensuring that they are given training that develops the skills needed for the job, satisfies national standards and meets the apprentice's personal requirements. Mentors are in regular contact with the training organisation.

# The Business Case for Participation

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Although the apprenticeship framework and completion processes may have changed in recent years, one essential fundamental still holds true – apprenticeship training remains the most effective way of passing on complex practical skills. That is why government policy is directed towards increasing the supply of apprenticeships; making them better suited to the needs of employers and learners alike, and improving both the quality and flexibility of the training offered.

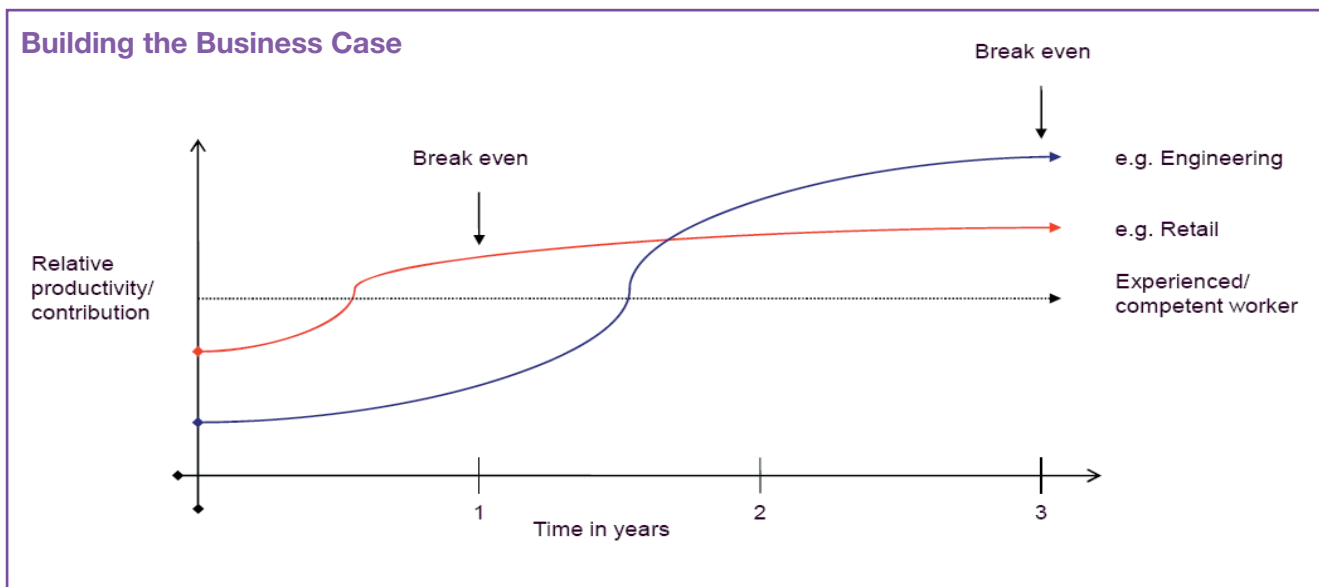
Nearly 90 per cent of businesses see apprentices as key to the future success of their organisation over next two years (City & Guilds, “Building Business through Apprenticeships”). Findings reveal that 52 per cent of those companies who already recruit apprentices believe that apprenticeships offer greater value than hiring university graduates. And 66 per cent of employers believe that apprenticeships are vital to ensure that the UK can compete in the changing global economy.

Apprenticeships though are not only about sustaining existing business models – they are vital for successful growth. Many employers recognise that their workforce has insufficient skills at intermediate technician and associate professional levels: skills critical to many industries and on which their future growth potential and competitiveness depends. Apprenticeships can offer a clear ladder of career progression delivering, and keeping in-house, those technician-level skills on which the jobs and industries of the coming decades will thrive. They also help develop additional specialist skills needed by employers to keep pace with the latest technology and working practices in their sector.

Apprenticeships are proven to be cost effective to the employer. As well as national funding initiatives to help employers with training costs, apprenticeships are good for bottom line returns in finance, productivity and competitiveness.



# The Business Case for Participation



A 17-year study by Dearn (2007) and others concluded:

*“An increase in the amount of training leads to an increase in productivity in that sector that is about double the wage gain of the individuals who are trained”.*

Apprenticeship employers tend to receive a positive reputation with their employees who value the investment in their skills competence. They tend to stay longer with an employer, be more aspirational for themselves and their company, and develop a lifelong attitude to learning. They want to be part of a success story. And employers should remember that an apprentice is there because they want to be – they have made an active choice to learn on the job and commit to a specific career.



# Nathan Burke

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Known for his dedication and maturity, Nathan is such a keen worker that his employer admits it is often difficult to tell him apart from the fully qualified staff.

After starting a pre-apprenticeship course at Tameside College in September, 2010, Nathan completed a level two IMI Awards motor vehicle maintenance and repair course, then moving up to level three. And all with 100 per cent attendance.

He has proved himself as courteous and always shown a willingness to help other students, particularly those less gifted than himself.

These qualities were immediately to the fore when he began a placement at an Ashton garage and he was quickly offered a full-time apprenticeship.

Alan Pickering of Marlborough Motors said, “We have trained a lot of lads over the years and Nathan is by far the best candidate we have ever had. We can see the potential in him.”

*“He is a very conscientious, punctual and hard-working young man and is making a very positive contribution.”*

*“We forget sometimes that Nathan is still training and are surprised that he cannot complete a job and needs it signed off by another member of staff.”*



# Partnership Working to Deliver Apprenticeships

## Tameside Apprenticeship Group

Effective partnership to deliver apprenticeships across the borough is essential. The formation of the Tameside Apprenticeship Group in 2009 gave initial strategic impetus to shared ambitions and priorities. The group has grown in strength, and partners are clear about what needs improving, and why, and are able to use their joint resources to make progress. Collaboration also allows for coordinated publicity and marketing, and for complementary work skills and pre-employment offers to be established which assist in apprenticeship uptake. Overall, there is a focus on removing barriers and boundaries, with partners being well supported and highly accountable. All partners work strategically with other networks, such as business leaders, employers and sector groups to further the apprenticeship agenda in the borough.

## Tameside's Partners:

### The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

The NAS has end-to-end responsibility for the delivery of apprenticeships, including employer and learner services, and a web-based vacancy matching system. This enables employers to search for learning providers delivering relevant apprenticeships, and to advertise their vacancies. It also allows prospective applicants to search and apply for apprenticeships.

### Training Providers – Work-Based and in Further Education

The borough has a strong network of work-based training providers who work closely together on employer engagement, streamlining

referrals, and developing a local, comprehensive apprenticeship framework offer across all sectors. High on their priority list is working with employers to develop appropriate offers for Higher and Advanced apprenticeships. Some of the biggest vocational training providers in the area are members, including Tameside College and Skills Solutions. As trainers, their commitment to partnership working is crucial in improving the quality of the experience for both employer and apprentice.

### Tameside Council

As the largest public sector employer, the Council is committed to being the market leader for apprenticeships. It also offers strategic leadership for stakeholders. Through its procurement processes and employer engagement networks it will ensure that apprenticeship and other training opportunities are included in appropriate tenders and supplementary planning agreements. The Council's Learning and Skills Service, Organisational Development and Economic Services work closely together and these, combined with very strong leadership from elected members and senior officers, drive the corporate apprenticeship ambition for the local authority.

### Job Centre Plus

Apprenticeships play a key role in reducing both adult and youth unemployment. Therefore, linking the Apprenticeship Strategy to wider welfare and work training reforms makes sense to both employers and residents. Potential apprentices need to be work-ready and well prepared for the

commitment involved, whilst training providers, brokerage organisations and funding bodies need to work more effectively together to simplify the process and encourage employers to take on apprentices. Job Centre Plus plays a vital role in raising apprenticeship awareness, with both employers and residents, and in providing the support mechanisms that lead to apprenticeship offers.

### Connexions

The Connexions Service provides impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to young people. It focuses primarily on vulnerable groups and those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET). Many young people have an interest in continuing their learning whilst in employment, and Connexions can offer personal support, mentoring and career advice to those considering the work-based route. Connexions has access to apprenticeship and other training opportunities and will work to help young people consider the range of apprenticeships available and support them with the application process.

### Tameside Business Family

Employer views are paramount: without business commitment to both strategic ambition and operational delivery, any apprenticeship plans risk failure. Business Family representation on the Apprenticeship Group, therefore, is particularly welcome. Members act as an invaluable conduit for exchanging views and information on issues facing employers in the current economic times. Their participation also serves to add credibility to the Group's deliberations and decisions.



# Aims of the Strategy

Tameside's Apprenticeship Strategy has four priorities and these will be delivered through increased partnership working. Those involved include a range of agencies, including public and private sector employers, education and training providers, funding agencies and the voluntary and community sectors.

## Strategic Priority 1 - to stimulate increased employer adoption of apprenticeships

- Develop and implement a borough wide campaign to promote apprenticeships to employers
- Embed the apprenticeship offer into broader business and recruitment support plans
- Systematically embed apprenticeship requirements into public and private sector procurement procedures
- Promote the conversion of existing workforce training to apprenticeships
- Target employers currently engaged with work experience support to secure new apprenticeship opportunities
- Ensure that employers are aware of the full range of support and financial incentives that they are entitled to from apprenticeship training providers and funders
- Work with employers and training providers to ensure that framework requirements meet employment needs, particularly at higher levels

## Strategic Priority 2 - to ensure that apprenticeships meet the needs of Tameside's economy, including the transformational sectors

- Drive up the volume and range of Advanced and Higher Level apprenticeship programmes
- Develop high quality flagship initiatives to support the development of apprenticeships in the transformational and main employment sectors
- Make clear to residents the links between Higher Apprenticeships and degree level qualifications
- Ensure that the borough's public sector employers lead the way in offering apprenticeships
- Ensure that apprenticeship priorities complement the wider ambition of the borough's Skills Strategy





# Aims of the Strategy

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**Strategic priority 3** - to promote apprenticeships as a quality route to Tameside residents and to drive increased participation

- Increase the number of apprenticeships available for residents to access
- Increase the apprenticeship participation of young people aged 16-19 to 25%
- Increase apprenticeship participation from under-represented groups
- Provide a Tameside programme of support to help young people aged 16-18 (particularly vulnerable groups) to access apprenticeships, and enlist employer support to recruit from this cohort
- Develop apprenticeship pathways from Key Stage 4 to Higher Education
- Support schools in discharging their responsibility for independent and impartial information, advice and guidance for post 16 progression, including apprenticeships
- Offer a wider range of specific pre-employment training to ensure that young people and adults are better prepared to become apprentices

**Strategic priority 4** - to ensure that apprenticeships delivered in Tameside are of the highest possible quality

- Increase the number of successful apprenticeship completions
- Increase the number of residents progressing through the apprenticeship levels
- Improve information, advice and guidance services to ensure residents are fully aware of the commitment and skills required to complete an apprenticeship
- Work with national agencies to monitor the quality of training provision in the borough, and prioritise apprenticeship expansion to those providers that add the greatest value
- Learn from, share and use the best practice of other areas to increase quality
- Encourage training provider collaboration to streamline referrals, increase sector and framework coverage and develop new local offers
- Ensure that the remits of strategic partnerships encompass apprenticeship growth within their accountabilities



# Aims of the Strategy

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## Employer Engagement and Support

In the current economic downturn, employers are rightfully cautious about the perceived burden of getting involved in apprenticeships, and the business benefits to be gained from so doing. Many are concerned about workforce sustainability rather than growth, and this is notably more acute for the borough's small and medium sized employers. Given that the key relationship in making an apprenticeship successful is that between the apprentice and the employer, it is critical that the employer engagement strategy involves both increasing the numbers of employers involved, and pays regard to developing the quality of those relationships.

### Barriers to further progress:

- Apprenticeships are perceived as time consuming to oversee, involve loss of productivity, and are too bureaucratic to administer
- Apprenticeships are perceived to be only available in traditional craft industries, and are only for employees needing entry or low level skills development
- Employers are confused about the funding mechanisms, range of opportunities and support available for developing employee skills, and recruitment is too complex

- Issues of quality prevent apprenticeship involvement – how do employers know the 'good' training providers, young people or adults are not ready for work or have insufficient literacy and numeracy basics
- Apprenticeships are only for new workforce recruits, and are not relevant to existing employees who are well qualified
- The capacity of small and medium sized employers (SMEs) to employ apprentices is limited, especially in the current climate
- Apprenticeship framework are too restrictive and do not meet the skills development needs of employers

### Strategic Priorities:

- Training providers and other agencies will produce a simple local employers' guide to employing apprentices, myth 'busters', and key contacts for further advice
- Employers and training providers will be encouraged to work together to pilot different approaches towards providing apprenticeships - these may involve consortia, group associations or sector based partnership approaches
- Support for whole workforce development will be available for employers - this will include developing current as well as new employees, including those supporting front line delivery (e.g. office, IT, transport)

- Employers will be provided with key, impartial information about apprenticeship training providers (success rates, retention rates, costs, ) to assist their decision making
- Employers will be presented with a clear business case for workforce development, including information on how externally funded training can increase productivity, support business growth and increase employee satisfaction and retention
- As part of the employer engagement strategy, there will be focus on those occupations and sectors not traditionally engaged with apprenticeships (e.g. finance, law, new technologies) and those identified as vital to developing the skills base of the Tameside economy

# Jamie Williams

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## Pride of Tameside Apprentice Mason Paviour of the year

Jamie Williams is using his apprenticeship as a mason pavior with Tameside Council's engineering services to pave the way to a successful career.

Last year he was not only the MANCAT College Marshalls' Apprentice Mason Pavior of the Year but took first prize at the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Highways and Street Lighting awards, beating 300 counterparts from across the country.

Before getting to the final, which was held in Newcastle, Jamie had to submit a portfolio to APSE outlining his achievements and aspirations. Mason paviors carry out highway and footway construction work including flagging, laying kerbs, block paving and decorative paving.

Jamie, who received his APSE award from Councillor Kieran Quinn, the Executive Leader of Tameside Council, said, "I have enjoyed my apprenticeship and would encourage anyone who is offered the chance of a place on a scheme to take it."

"My ambition is to carry on with my qualifications and eventually progress to a managerial role. Winning the apprentice of the year award has been the icing on the cake."





# Aims of the Strategy

## The Apprentices - Young People and Adults

Government policy regarding young people's participation in Education, Employment and Training (EET) to the age of 18 remains firm. Increasing the number of young people employed as apprentices is a key part of that ambition, and granted equal status to the achievement of GCSEs and A Levels. The statutory participation age is due to rise to 17 in 2013 and 18 by 2015.

This increase in young people taking apprenticeships is also reflected in the ambitions of Tameside Council as part of its employment and skills strategy, whereby a significant improvement in the skills base of the borough's residents is integral to increasing youth employment. The strategy calls for one in every four young people aged 16-18 to be in an apprenticeship by 2015. Current participation is around 20.4%.

Additionally, an increased focus needs to be given to providing apprenticeships for those adults aged over 19 and 24: many employers are not aware that such opportunities exist. Partnership working needs to ensure that where recruitment opportunities occur as a result of inward investment, business start-ups and entrepreneurial growth, apprenticeships are the preferred training route.

Employers also need to be more aware that converting existing training programmes for their adult workforce can create benefits. Not only in bringing about short term financial support to help with costs but also by putting into place career development pathways offering medium and long term gains to the business, and improved job satisfaction for the employee.

### Barriers to further progress:

- Young people are not fully aware of apprenticeships as an alternative route to further and higher education
- Young people, especially those with above average academic potential, are not fully aware of the range of apprenticeship frameworks, or that the breadth and volume of opportunities matches their employment and career aspirations
- Apprenticeships are perceived as being only for trade occupations: a perception often reinforced by family or peer attitudes
- Potential apprentices of all ages are not fully aware of the next steps to getting involved
- Minority ethnic groups are under-represented in the borough's apprentice numbers
- Poor basic skills are often a barrier to apprenticeships – an inhibitor often magnified by a lack of other employability factors
- The potential of progression through the apprenticeship route needs greater market visibility: to Higher Levels 4 and 5 of learning,

more take-up of Advanced Level 3 and generating employer demand at Higher Apprenticeship levels

- A highly competitive employment market increasingly includes graduates and other well qualified applicants, thus reducing adult recruitment opportunities to apprenticeships

### Strategic Priorities:

- Increase the annual number of apprenticeships available in the 16-18, 19-24 and 25+ age groups. Numbers in the 16-18 age range will be measured against the trajectory targets set to achieve 1 in 4 by 2015
- Partnership work amongst providers will identify and brand those programmes (foundation learning, work experience and tasters, pre-employment training, basic skills etc.) as pre-apprenticeship offers, offering a first-step model to employment opportunities. These will be well understood by all partners
- 'Sure Start' work will provide a better focus on matching supply side availability with young people's peak demand (e.g. end of academic year), as well as providing schools and families with relevant and timely information regarding the benefits of apprenticeships
- 'Sure Start' work will increase those factors associated with successful induction on to apprenticeships:
  - o Prior experience of work-based learning
  - o Screening for literacy and numeracy needs



# Aims of the Strategy

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- o Tailored Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to different groups
- o Early diagnostic assessment to identify learning support
- o A focus on the planning of training and assessment, and the involvement of the apprentice in the overall framework model
- o Good key/functional skills provision, contextualised to areas of learning thus increasing relevance.
- o Training provider staff possessing a strong vocational background
- o Employer support - facilitating the capture of work based evidence, coordination of on/off site training, employment flexibility
- o Regular contact between all partners ( and the parents/carers of young people) to focus on targets and positive progress
- Success and completion rates for apprentices will be improved by building and sharing the best practice around mentoring, coaching and administrative efficiency support for employers as they fulfil their supervisory roles
- High quality information, advice and support is provided which challenges stereotypical attitudes towards apprenticeships - this will be additionally targeted at under-represented groups such as women and ethnic minorities
- The employer engagement strategy encompasses work to generate additional demand at Advanced L3, and obtains an evidence-based account of how to best develop Higher L4 and L5 apprenticeships across the borough
- Information and awareness raising around the benefits of apprenticeships (for young people, adults and employers) will be integral to the borough's vision for the raising the aspirations of its residents and employment sectors, and developing entrepreneurial attitudes



# Aims of the Strategy

## Tameside Council and Corporate Commitment

To reduce poverty in Tameside and enable local companies to become more competitive, there is a recognised need to raise the skills levels and learning aspirations of Tameside's residents and employees on a significant scale. To maximise resources and achieve the number of opportunities required, an aligned approach to apprenticeships and training, and shared sense of responsibility for skills improvement is needed from all sectors. For elected members, increasing the numbers of apprenticeships forms part of their commitment as community leaders – developing skills and increasing positive participation is a central plank of their Community Strategy.

In order to achieve these goals, the Council has committed to work with public, private and third sector partners to help people in Tameside break out of the cycle of low skills and low wages. TMBC involvement with the Tameside Apprenticeship Steering Group is a demonstration of that commitment.

Additionally however, the Council has taken further action. It has declared its ambition to position itself as the borough's market leader in terms of exemplary apprenticeship practice – increasing apprenticeship employment; the promotion and marketing of apprenticeships through its communication channels; strategic

and executive leadership support; the use of its procurement powers to improve opportunities; and its organisational capacity building for apprenticeship progression through its workforce development arm.

### Barriers to further progress:

- Formal recognition that apprenticeship provision forms part of the Council's recruitment and workforce development strategy
- Further implementation of the Council's commitment to engage its full supply chain in providing apprenticeships
- Better information gathering and needs analysis of apprenticeship opportunities across the Council, particularly in relation to the workforce development of existing staff, leading to progressive career training pathways
- Further strengthening of the Council's strategic leadership role, seeking to position itself as a high performing public sector apprenticeship champion

### Strategic priorities:

#### Tameside Council will ensure that:

- Apprenticeships will be the preferred entry-level recruitment route, unless there is a strong business case not to do so

- Workforce development practice will utilise the apprenticeship framework to develop career pathways in service areas, especially where there are, or are likely to be, skills shortages
- Workforce development practice will, where possible, seek to convert existing in-house and other training programmes into apprenticeships (where continuing quality can be assured)
- Workforce development practice will utilise apprenticeships to support redeployment training as envisioned in the Chief Executive's 'Working for Tameside' commitment
- The programme of work-related and pre-employment taster experiences for the borough's young people has apprenticeship and employability capability as essential outcomes
- Its relationships with its arms-length organisations are used to promote apprenticeship provision, including the setting of numbers where relevant
- The Tameside Investment Partnership promotes pre-employment and in-work skills development packages, using apprenticeships as the preferred route
- As a commissioner of goods and services, it will develop further its framework of support with its partners and employers to increase apprenticeship numbers and employment opportunities to the benefit of local people

# Aims of the Strategy

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- As demonstration of its corporate parenting commitment, the Council will ring-fence appropriate work placement and apprenticeship opportunities to eligible care leavers and those in care
- Trade unions and Union Learn are involved in the development of apprenticeships as a key strategy for employee recruitment, succession planning, and retention and career progression
- It works with partners to ensure that those in the Youth Offending system are advantaged in terms of apprenticeship employment
- It forges strong links with the National Apprenticeship Service, training and post 16 providers, Job Centre Plus, Connexions, employer groups, and other relevant agencies to ensure that the borough's apprenticeship strategy has a strong, high level strategic steer
- The borough wide apprenticeship strategy informs and benefits from involvement in the Greater Manchester infrastructure and governance model established to support apprenticeship and skills growth
- It strengthens its marketing leadership through publicity, promotion and hosting of the borough's 'Apprenticeship' website





# Aims of the Strategy

## Apprenticeship Training Providers

A wide range of training providers offer tailored and specialised training for Tameside's employers. They offer both on-and off-the job training to reflect employer training needs. Essential support is available to employers around recruitment, selection of apprenticeship frameworks, administrative processes and managing record-keeping and claims. All providers support employers with regular monitoring visits, speaking to both supervisors and apprentices in person to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made towards completing the full apprenticeship framework.

Tameside has a strong local provider presence, and additionally benefits from both Greater Manchester networks and national organisation involvement. Many of Tameside's providers are members of the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network, a group which works collaboratively to improve the offers across the sub-region, drive up levels of satisfaction, and improve the range and accessibility of apprenticeships on offer. Members also work closely with the National Apprenticeship Service to offer streamlined referral services thus ensuring that the time period between employer expressions of interest and placement offers is the minimum.

Tameside's key providers have pledged to work more closely together to increase employer and

potential apprentice engagement, streamline communications and publicity, and ensure that apprenticeship coverage across the borough meets both existing and future workforce training needs.

### Barriers to further progress:

- A lack of shared, detailed knowledge of apprenticeship and work based training offers in the borough and their structures
- Confusion amongst employers over funding availability and apprentice eligibility
- The need to ensure that a sufficient range of apprenticeship is available to cover Tameside's key occupational sectors in the local labour market
- A lack of small and medium enterprise 'voice' in apprenticeship strategy.

### Strategic Priorities:

- Ensure that employers and potential apprentices are aware of the National Apprenticeship Service, and its vacancy matching service (VMS) and how to access it
- Ensure that all stakeholders, and employers specifically, are fully aware of the funding opportunities, priorities and constraints
- Encourage apprenticeship training providers and employers to work together to pilot different approaches to increasing the number of apprenticeships available in under-represented sectors and population groups (e.g. BME)

- Promote [www.tameside.gov.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/apprenticeships) as the best place to find out detailed information about local apprenticeships
- Encourage members of the Tameside Learning Provider Network to position the network as a conduit for improving local intelligence and engagement around apprenticeship provision
- Forge better links with signatories to the Tameside Employment and Skills Charter and Tameside Employment Partnership to develop apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship development and support packages
- For providers to work collaboratively to increase the numbers of Higher Apprenticeship frameworks that meet local employment needs
- Develop stronger links with the borough's high-priority area partnerships to prioritise apprenticeship recruitment to NEET groups and long-term unemployed residents.



# Tom Arrundale

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## Building Merchant Federation National Apprentice of the Year – Benchmark

Apprentice building merchant Tom Arrundale is shaping a fine career.

The 20-year-old from Hyde, who started at Tameside firm Benchmark in 2010, has already been named Building Merchant Federation National Apprentice of the Year as well as attaining a raft of NVQs.

Tom, who attended Alder High School, Hyde, and Ashton Sixth-Form College, was invited to an interview at Benchmark while at Tameside Council's Apprenticeship Fair.

He has since gone from strength to strength, gaining experience in the yard and at the trade counter before stepping up to look after key accounts and tendering for contracts.

*“I didn't want to carry on with an academic route. I didn't feel confident in spending thousands on a degree when there was no guarantee of a job.”*

*“Taking an apprenticeship has all the benefits. I have learned more than I expected, earned qualifications and gained practical skills.”*

*“My colleagues are great. Everybody is happy to give me advice and help me, and I am constantly learning. I'd like to see how far I can progress through the company, but ultimately I've always wanted to have my own business, even though that's a long way off.”*



# Aims of the Strategy

## Tameside Apprenticeship Strategy – Broad Outline of Actions 2012-15

Strategic Priority	Supporting Actions
<p><b>SP1</b> Stimulate increased employer adoption of Apprenticeships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borough wide apprenticeship campaign to employers – business advantages, financial support</li> <li>• Support businesses with apprenticeship recruitment and administration</li> <li>• Embed apprenticeship recruitment into public and private sector procurement procedures</li> <li>• Convert training of current workforce to apprenticeships</li> <li>• Encourage different approaches to providing apprenticeships – e.g. group training models</li> <li>• Convert work experience, internships into apprenticeships</li> <li>• Meet employer demand for framework flexibility, and higher level technical and supervisory apprenticeships</li> </ul>
<p><b>SP2</b> Ensure that the borough-wide Apprenticeship offer meet the needs of Tameside’s economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase volume and range of Advanced and Higher Level Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Flagship initiatives to increase apprenticeships in transformational and key employment sectors</li> <li>• Increase public sector commitment to increase apprenticeship take-up</li> <li>• Apprenticeship strategy embedded as key to delivery of a wider Skills Strategy</li> <li>• Make links between Higher Apprenticeships and degree level qualifications explicit to residents</li> </ul>
<p><b>SP3</b> Promote Apprenticeships as a quality learning/ training route to residents, and drive increased participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Apprenticeship numbers in all age ranges – and progression - and framework availability</li> <li>• Increase apprenticeship participation from under-represented groups</li> <li>• Develop apprenticeship pathways from school to adulthood</li> <li>• Support schools to improve student awareness and knowledge of the apprenticeship route</li> <li>• Support apprenticeship ‘readiness’ by providing a range of pre-employment opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>SP4</b> Ensure that Apprenticeships in Tameside are of the highest possible quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of successful apprenticeship completions</li> <li>• Improve information, advice and guidance about the apprenticeship offer to improve on-course retention</li> <li>• Work collaboratively in the borough with local providers, employers, national agencies and others to improve the quality of apprenticeship experiences</li> <li>• Ensure that apprenticeship growth is recognised in the remit of key strategic partners</li> </ul>



## **Acknowledgement and Partner Agencies**

### **National Apprenticeship Service**

[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

Tel: 08000 150 600

### **Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**

[www.tameside.gov.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/apprenticeships)

Tel: 0161 342 2191

### **Connexions – Tameside**

[www.connexions-tameside.com](http://www.connexions-tameside.com)

Tel: 0161 330 1528

### **JobCentre Plus**

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Tel: 0845 604 3719

### **Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network**

[www.gmlpn.co.uk](http://www.gmlpn.co.uk)

Tel: 0161 654 1508

### **Tameside College of Further Education**

[www.tameside.ac.uk](http://www.tameside.ac.uk)

Tel: 0161 908 6600

### **Skills Solutions**

<http://www.skills-solutions.org.uk>

Tel: 0161 233 2656

### **Tameside Business Family**

[www.tamesidebusinessfamily.com](http://www.tamesidebusinessfamily.com)

Tel: 0161 342 2058