

# Construction Scotland Apprenticeship Task Force

Apprenticeship Survey Findings – July 2020



# Survey Overview

Scottish Construction Employers were surveyed online for two weeks (03 July to 20 July) to receive views around the impact of the Coronavirus and what this could mean for Construction Modern Apprenticeships going forward in Scotland.

On survey close there were over **630** responses and this report draws out the main findings.



# Summary

- Coronavirus has caused just over half (55%) of Scottish Employers who had planned to recruit an apprentice this year to change their plans
- Most are looking to reduce the number of apprentices taken on, although for micro sized companies with less than 10 employees, this is more likely to mean they would not take any apprentices on.
- Additional support measures such as grants & funding, subsidised wages, and work trials would be helpful in encouraging these employers to hire an apprentice
- Additional support measures could also help to encourage some employers who hadn't looked to take on an apprentice this year, to re-consider their plans.
- Encouragingly, over three quarters of all employers (76%) saw value in this year's apprentice applicants completing construction pre-employment training, to ensure industry can retain individuals for when there is confidence to recruit.

# Sample profile



- Nearly half (48%) of surveyed firms were Micro (less than 10 employees) companies, followed by a third (32%) from Small companies (10-49 employees) companies.
- The most common main work activity was either Building completion and finishing (35%) or Construction of residential and non-residential buildings (30%).
- Greater numbers of main site locations were found in Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Lothian and Lanarkshire.
- The majority of employers have between 2 to 5 apprentices in training (51%) or only one apprentice in training (43%) at the moment.

Company size	Counts	Percentages
1 (just you)	15	2%
2-4 employees	184	29%
5-9 employees	103	16%
10-24 employees	139	22%
25-49 employees	61	10%
50-99 employees	53	8%
100-249 employees	33	5%
250+ employees	46	7%

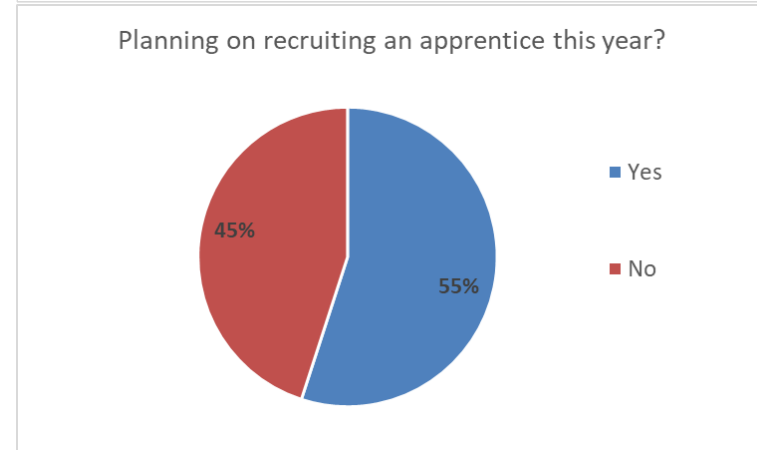
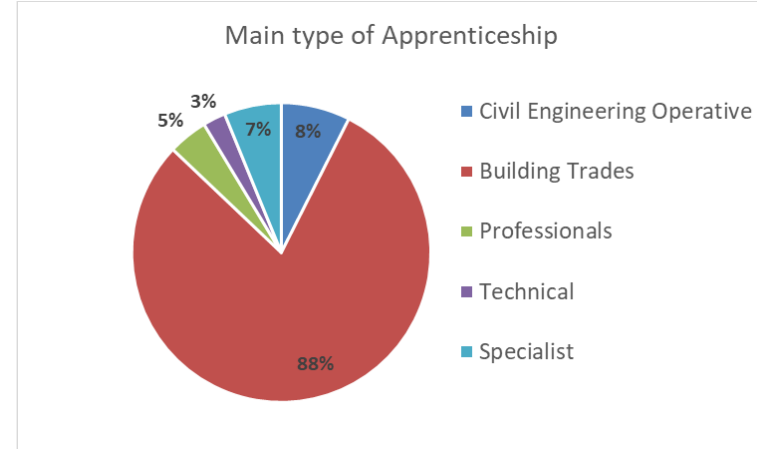
# Recruiting Apprentices - Plans



- Nearly all employers (97%) had taken on an apprentice in the past.
- Half had taken on an apprentice a year ago (50%), with just over a fifth (21%) taking on an apprentice 2 years ago.
- The majority had recruited apprentices into Construction Building trades (88%).

## Apprentice recruitment plans before Coronavirus:

- 45% of all employers were not planning on recruiting this year
- 55% of employers were planning on recruiting this year



# Recruiting Apprentices – Coronavirus impact



For the employers who had planned to recruit an apprentice before Coronavirus:

- For most (69%), this would have been the same number as previous years
- Only a small proportion (12%) were planning on taking less apprentices

However Coronavirus has caused a majority of these employers to change their plans.

Before  
Coronavirus  
348  
employers  
planned to  
take on an  
apprentice

148 (43%) no change in plans due to Coronavirus

200 (57%) had changed  
plans due to Coronavirus

101 (29%) not looking to take on any apprentices

50 (14%) recruiting fewer apprentices

47 (14%) not sure of plans

2 (<1%) looking to recruit more apprentices

# Recruiting Apprentices - Coronavirus

Employers were grouped into one of three main categories, depending on how questions were answered.

1. Those that **were** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have not** changed their plans: 23% of total
2. Those that **were** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have** changed their plans: 31% of total
3. Those who **were not** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have not** changed their plans: 42% of total



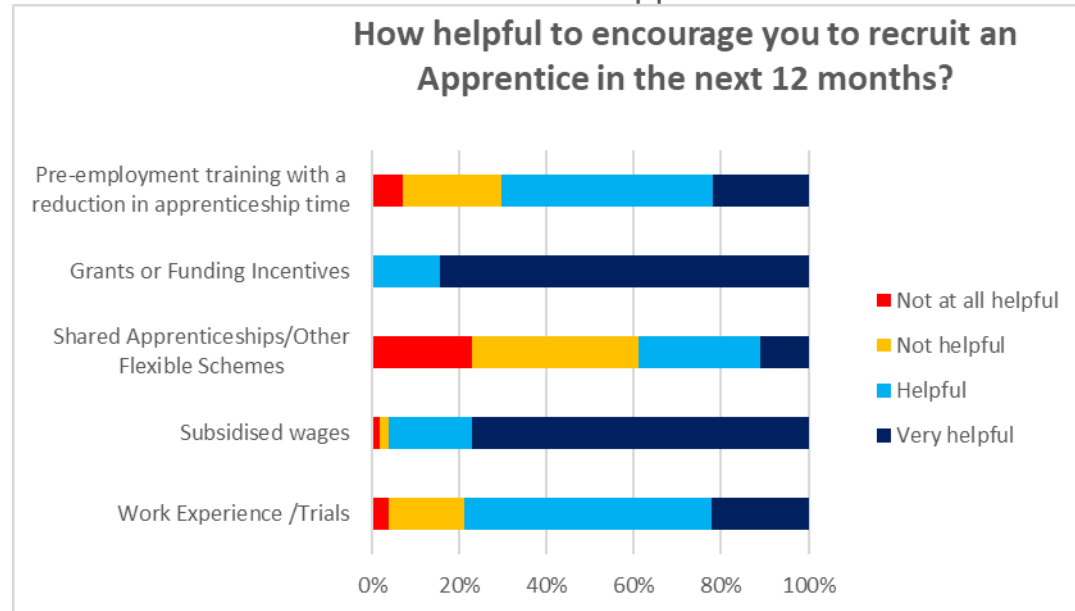
# Those that **were** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have not** changed their plans

While these employers had not changed their plans, most (78%) saw value in recruits completing Construction Pre-employment training

Although they were planning on recruiting an apprentice, just over three quarters (76%) would be encouraged to recruit an apprentice in the next 12 months if there was additional support.

All options mentioned would help however there was a clear view that support with:

- Grants or Funding incentives (84%) and Wage subsidies (77%) are clearly seen as being very helpful
- Whereas there was mixed views on shared apprenticeship schemes





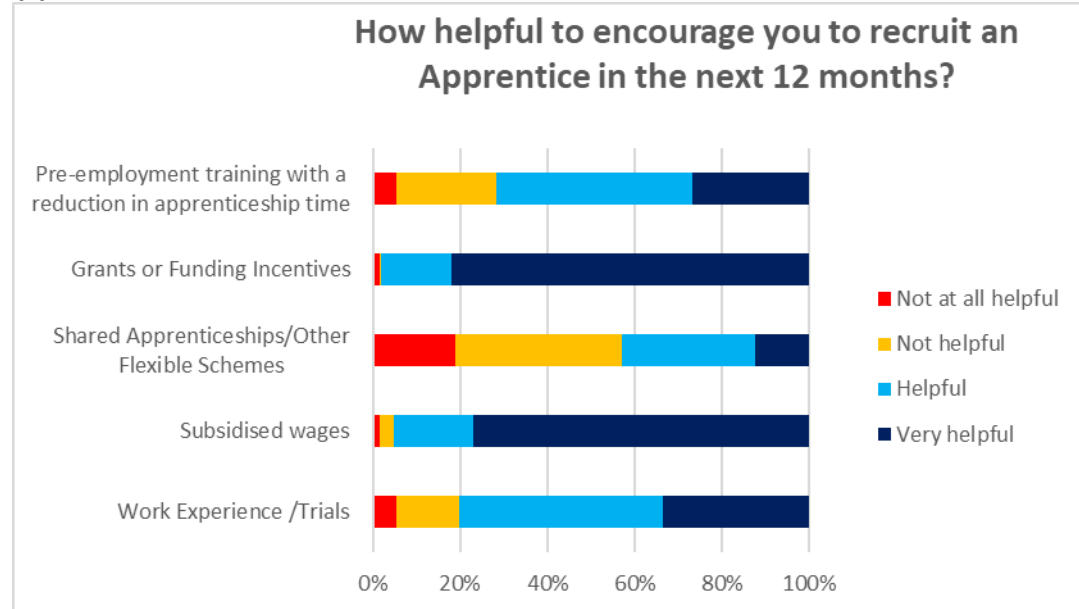
# Those that **were** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have** changed their plans

Over three quarters (76%) of these employers also saw value in apprentice applicants completing Construction Pre-employment training

Although they had changed plans for taking on apprentices, nearly all employers (97%) felt that additional support would encourage them to recruit an apprentice in the next 12 months.

Again all options mentioned would help however there was a clear view that support with:

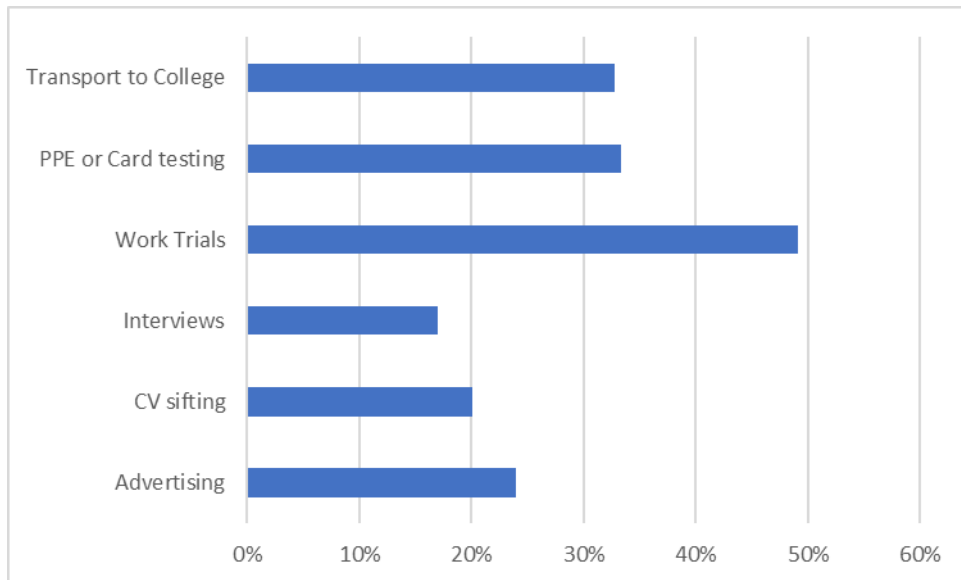
- Grants or Funding incentives (82%) and Wage subsidies (77%) are clearly seen as being very helpful
- More mixed views on whether shared apprenticeships would help



## Those that **were** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have** changed their plans

This group were also asked a question about the range of areas where they might need support in recruiting apprentices.

- Just under half (49%) of these employers would welcome support with work trials
- Followed by a third (33%) looking for support with either transport to college and PPE or card testing.
- Lowest levels of support were needed for CV sifting and interviewing.



# Those **not** planning to take on an Apprentice and **have not** changed plans

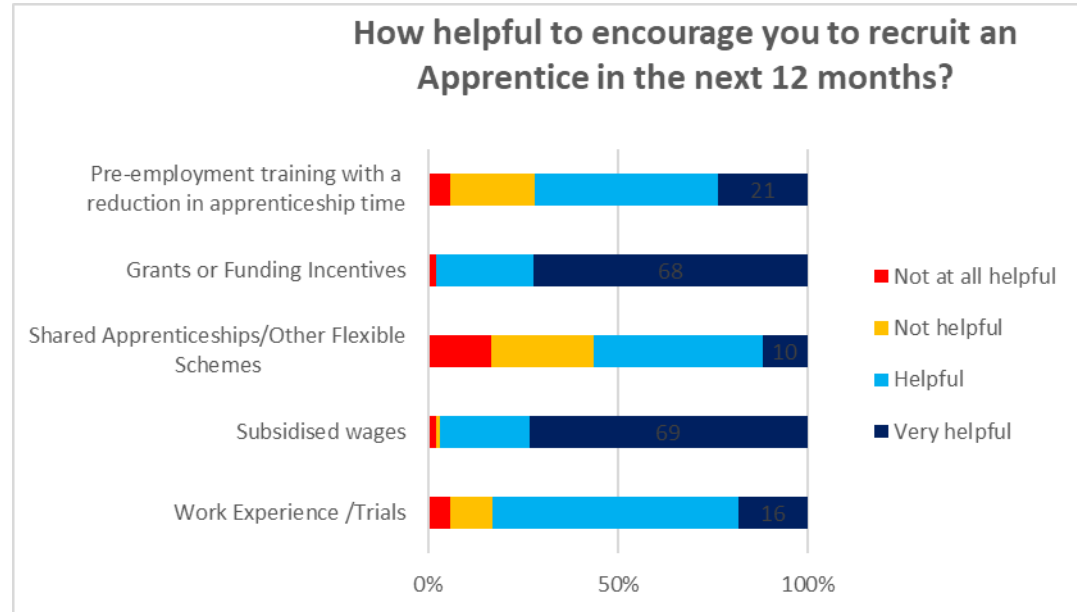
Although employers were not planning to take on an apprentice, most (73%) saw value in applicants completing Construction Pre-employment training to help retain them for when ready to recruit.

When asked if additional support measures were available, would it encourage them to consider recruiting an apprentice in the next 12 months?

- For most, the answer was No: 64%
- However, just over a third (35%) said Yes

Of those that said Yes, all options mentioned would help however there was a clear view that support with:

- Wages (73%) and Grants or Funding incentives (72%) would be very helpful
- Still a mixed view on shared apprenticeship schemes



# Re-cap

- Coronavirus has caused just over half (55%) of Scottish Employers who had planned to recruit an apprentice this year to change their plans
- Most are looking to reduce the number of apprentices taken on, although for micro sized companies with less than 10 employees, this is more likely to mean they would not take any apprentices on.
- Additional support measures such as grants & funding, subsidised wages, and work trials would be helpful in encouraging these employers to hire an apprentice
- Additional support measures could also help to encourage some employers who hadn't looked to take on an apprentice this year, to re-consider their plans.
- Encouragingly, over three quarters of all employers (76%) saw value in this year's apprentice applicants completing construction pre-employment training, to ensure industry can retain individuals for when there is confidence to recruit.

# Points to consider

- The findings suggest the Scottish construction sector is facing a sharp decline in apprenticeship recruitment in the immediate term
- However, with a significant proportion of employers seeing value in preparing applicants for recruitment further down the road, it indicates there is the potential to regain some of the lost ground over the coming years.
- Supporting apprenticeship recruitment could help mitigate the effects of a skills lag on the long term success of the industry as it recovers and has to meet demand for housing, infrastructure and the drive to net-zero.
- The challenge is how best we can keep people who are interested in the industry, but do not yet have access to employment opportunities, engaged via learning opportunities.
- Should also consider, when looking at interventions, whether this is about employers needing additional support or in fact is it more about better sign posting of funding they are able to access to take on an apprentice.