

APPRENTICESHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: FINAL CASE STUDY

Better Employer Engagement (BEE)

Organisations/Partnership Names:

- SETA (Sunderland Engineering Training Association)
- PETA (Portsmouth Engineering Training Association)
- JCB
- IAE
- The University of Sheffield, AMRC Training Centre
- Xtrac

CREATED BY

seta^{oo}

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Better Employer Engagement

Project Overview

Project Better Employer Engagement sought to examine the correlation between better employer engagement in apprenticeship delivery leading to better progress and retention of engineering apprentices. The project looked at employer understanding of the apprenticeship delivery model, their enhanced role in progress reviews, their enhanced role in mentoring apprentices fully whilst at work. As the project developed an additional activity was added to evaluate the cost of recruiting an engineering apprentice and therefore the cost of attrition of apprentices and replacement – not counting the hidden cost of lost skills and wasted opportunities for the employer.

Project Aims

Improving retention of apprentices is a key focus for most employers (and training providers) so that they develop their future workforces, reinforcing existing skills and building new skills. The focus of the project is how employers can better retain their apprentices – when there currently is a national drop-out of around 35% in engineering apprenticeships. For our employer providers, the drop-out rate is no more than 10%. The packages of work undertaken during the project have all fed back to this central aim.

Strategically, engineering and manufacturing are key priorities in the North East of England as demonstrated in the **Local Skills Improvement Plan** and **Local Enterprise Partnership**. Development and retention of engineering and manufacturing skills are crucial to achieving highly technical industries such as car and battery production in the North East especially linked to Nissan and Hitachi Rail production.

The ambition of the government to **drive up all apprentice retention to 67% by 2025** will be supported by this project.

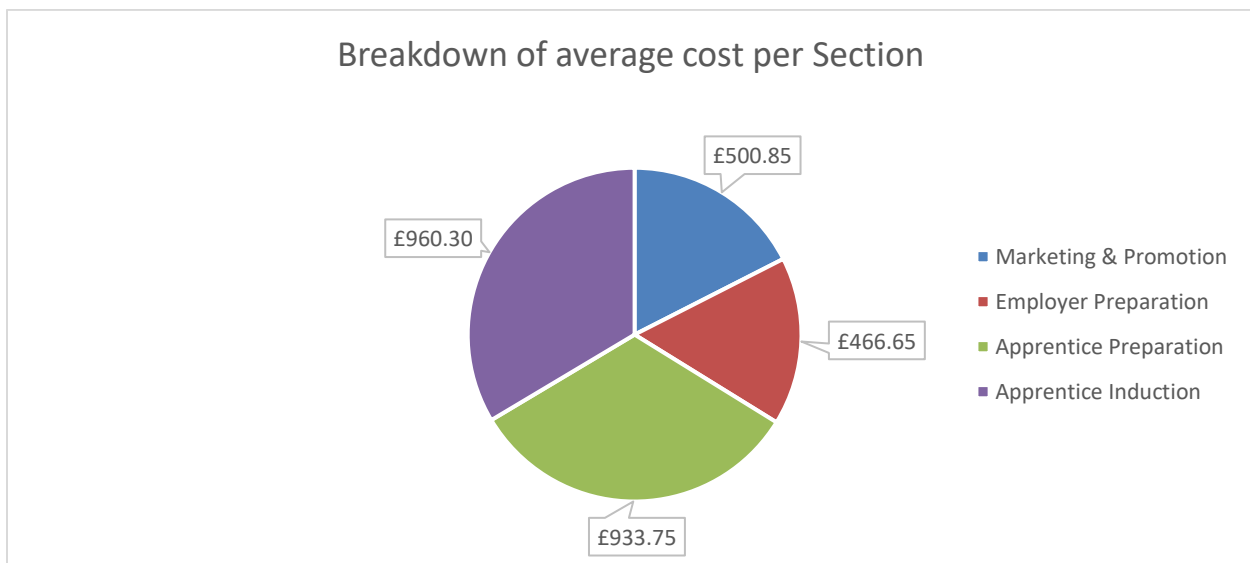
Positive Impact and Expected Outcomes

1. The cost of recruiting an apprentice – partners agreed to develop a survey of questions relating to onboarding activities. Partners also decided on a nominal £45 per hour for labour costs. The survey questions were shared with 3 partner training providers SETA, PETA and AMRC as well as the 3 employer providers IAE, JCB and Xtrac. The survey was also sent to AELP members who are engineering providers, and three responses were received.

Key Outcome – Product - Cost of Recruitment Survey Report / Findings.

Key Outputs – Cost of Recruitment Report - Findings / Evaluation / Influence on the sector and to employers i.e., how much effort is required to take on an apprentice and the cost of replacement.

Average Total Labour Costs to Recruit An Engineering Apprentice (based on £45 per hour): £ per Apprentice = 63.58 hours x £45 = £2861.10



Notes about the data:

- The total cost doesn't include additional costs.
- When determining the total number of hours spent, the average hours between 'Apprentice Induction for Employers' and 'Apprentice Induction for Training Providers' are amalgamated.
- Individually averaged hours/cost may not add up completely to the final total due to rounding when transferred into this report.
- Some responses listed a range of hours, so the median was taken for the purposes of calculation. E.g., the stated range of 5-10 hours gets treated as 7.5 hours.

The findings should be of particular interest to:

Employers – to work harder to retain apprentices to retain skills and knowledge in ways that the project has seen to address:

- Better employer knowledge and understanding of the apprenticeship standards (Simplified Training Plan).
- Better employer engagement in the progress reviews (4 Part Progress Review)
- Better training of mentors of apprentices (Mentor Handbook & Presentation)
- Better efforts to retain apprentices working with training providers in collaboration – identifying the cost of replacement as a real cost to both parties.

Training Providers – to work more closely with employers to engender better understanding of apprenticeship standards, better engagement in progress reviews with better target-setting to include employers. Many providers offer mentor training, and the project has developed a 1-day course to support this.

Government / College & Training Provider Associations

- To recognise the cost of recruiting an apprentice in the whole funding regime
- To support the sector through the easing of compliance and regulations relating to breaks in learning to enable re-engagement of early leaver apprentices or easier transfer to different apprenticeship standards.

2. The value of employer contribution to the training plan/delivery model – partners agreed that employers do not truly understand how apprenticeship standards are run. This was confirmed at the Mentoring an Apprentice training workshop on 11th August 2023. A simplified training plan was devised and shared to cover the new apprenticeship standard for Machining Level 3. Without employers or apprentices understanding how the standards are set up with Gateway and EPA, then they cannot truly engage in the process.

Key Outcome – Product - Training Plan/Delivery Model Machining Level 3 Apprenticeship Standard

Key Outputs – Training Plan/Delivery Model format that can be replicated across many other apprenticeship standards.

Seta Ofsted Inspection Report 23-26 May 2023

“Leaders have expertise in the training, development, and design of apprenticeship standards. Recently leaders have been involved in the steering group for the development of machining apprenticeship level 3.”

Employer providers anecdotally have found this delivery model format to be useful and SETA has replicated this for all other standards. Peta and AMRC are adopting aspects about the simplicity of this model for their 2023-24 intake.

3. The value of employer contribution to quarterly progress reviews – Training Provider partners carried out a survey 25 progress reviews from January/February 2023 and then again 12 progress reviews in August 2023. The intention to see if the new progress review had improved employer engagement. The intention was to see if the new progress review had improved employer engagement.

Key Outcome – Products x 2 – Better Employer Engagement in Progress Reviews Report. The new progress review document is in 4 parts – A, B, C, and D. Different processes whereby the employer is sent Part B and the apprentice Part A, prior to the progress review appointment.

Key Outputs – The revised process increases engagement, target-setting, and a better understanding of the apprenticeship journey. much increased employer engagement.

Respondents: Seta, Peta, AMRC (Training Providers)

Survey 1:	25 Progress Reviews were sampled at each provider for Engineering Apprentices from January/February 2023
Survey 2:	12 Progress Reviews were sampled at each provider for engineering Apprentices from August 2023

New Progress Review format and process introduced April 2023 (with input from Ofsted / ESFA consultants)

Main Aim To measure the level of employer engagement in progress reviews for engineering apprentices.

- Completing their section of the progress review in advance of the meeting
- Assessing the apprentice’s knowledge, skills, behaviours
- Making more useful comments and being more aware of the apprentice’s progress
- Involvement in target-setting and planning Gateway & EPA

Sub Aims

- To improve the quality of target-setting – timescales & content
- To improve target-setting for improved behaviours
- To improve Careers Information Advice & Guidance
- To improve the logging of Off-the-Job Hours

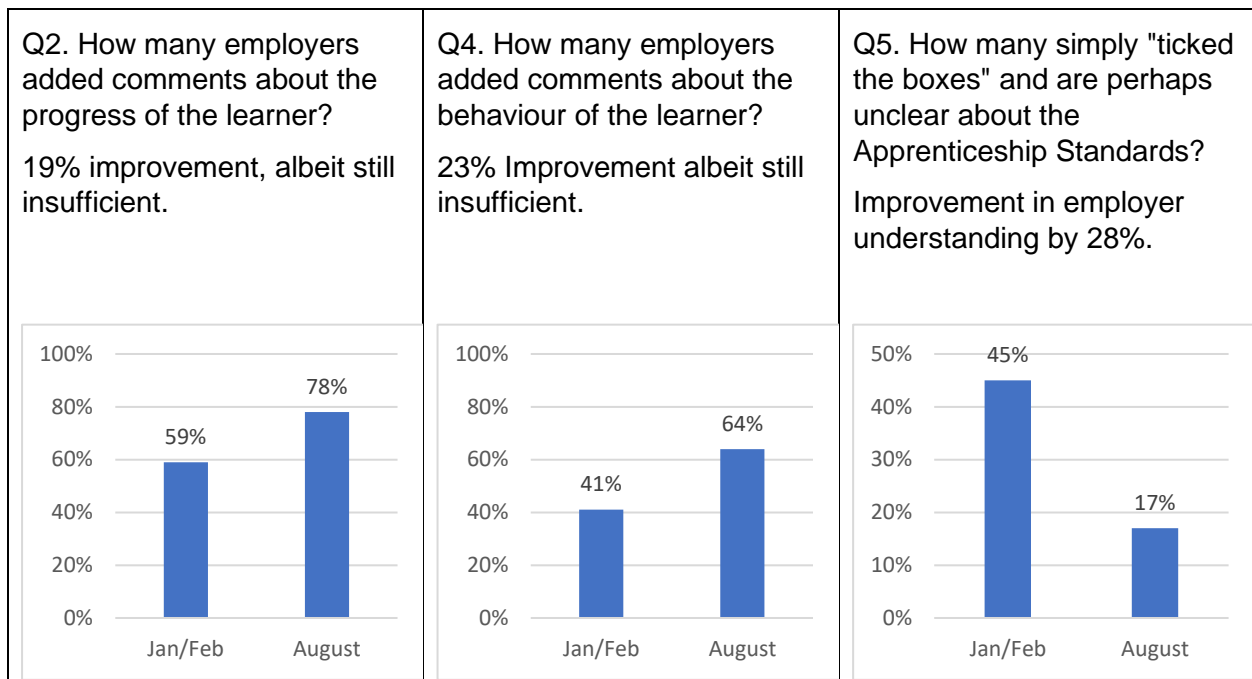
- To improve apprentice self-development in preparing for progress reviews independently

This was commented upon during Seta’s most recent **Ofsted Inspection Report 23-26 May 2023:**

“Leaders...identify emerging areas for improvement that subsequently inform staff training. For example, they identified that employer involvement in apprentice progress reviews was an area for improvement. There is now much-increased employer involvement in tripartite reviews.”

Notable improvements in the quality of progress reviews by introducing the new format and process. As can be seen below:

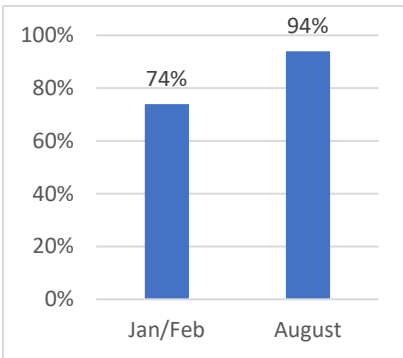
Section A: Employer Engagement



Section B: Off The Job Hours

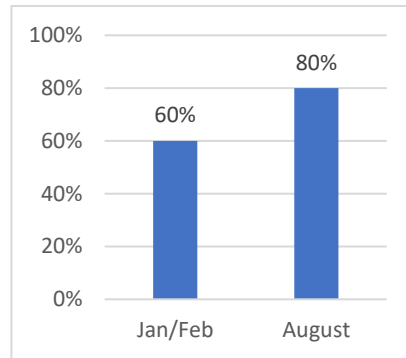
Q6. Is there a clear record of “off the job learning” hours where the apprentice is learning new skills at work?

20% improvement and now reaching high level.



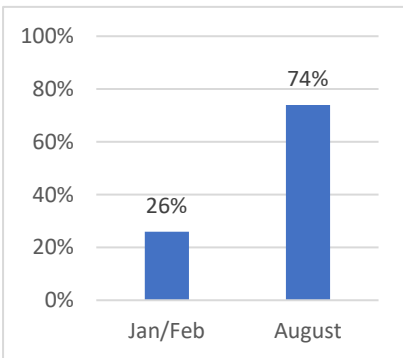
Q7. Is there a clear record of maths, English and digital learning that continues throughout the apprenticeship?

20% improvement albeit still too low.



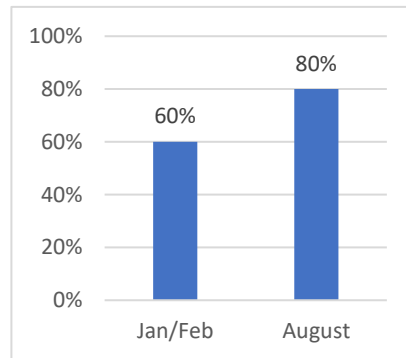
Q8. Is there a clear record of IAG – continuing careers and sector information?

48% marked improvement albeit still too low.



Q10. Is there a clear record of mandatory qualification hours of learning?

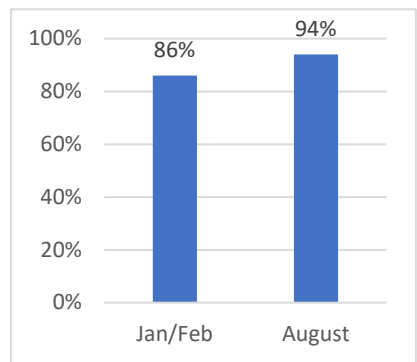
20% improvement albeit still insufficient.



Section C: Progress

Q13. Is progress against the Apprenticeship Standard clear?

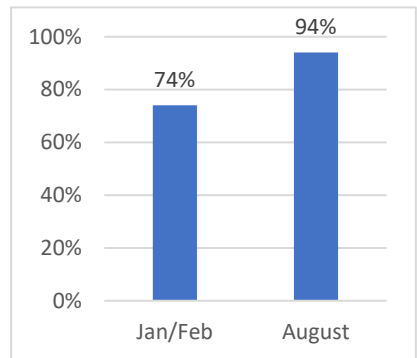
8% Improvement but high-level indicators already which would be expected.



D: Target Setting

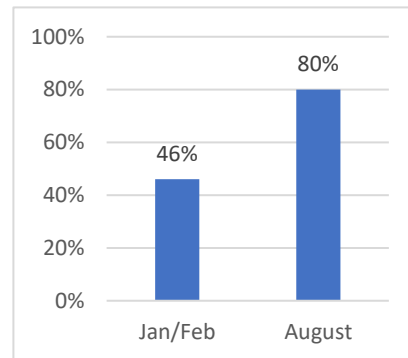
Q16. Are targets set for the apprentice?

20% Improvement in target-setting.



Q17. Are targets set for short, medium, and long-term?

34% Improvement, which is a marked increase.

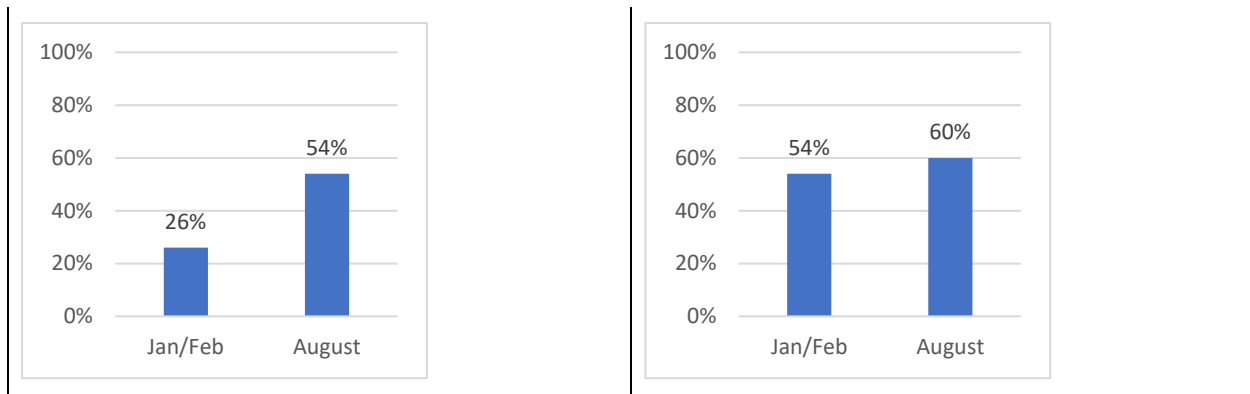


Q18. Are targets set for the employer?

28% Improvement albeit still too low.

Q19. Are targets set for the personal development and behaviours of the apprentice?

6% Improvement albeit still too low.



In summary – the revised format of the progress review and revised process has seen some marked improvements.

Employer engagement – 19% more employer comments and 23% more commentary about the behaviour of the apprentice and anecdotally much better understanding of the apprenticeship standards. However, both indicators are below **75% which indicates around 25-30% of employers are not engaging in the progress review. Around 40% of employers are not set or engaged in target-setting although this has improved from around 80% not being involved prior to the new progress review.**

Off the Job Learning – 20% increase in accurate recording of off-the-job learning hours, inclusion of maths/English embedding. 48% marked increase in the recording of IAG on progress reviews.

Progress – 94% of progress reviews sampled now show clear progress against the apprenticeship standards.

Target-setting – perhaps the weakest area with 56% now engaging employers, and only 60% setting targets for personal development and behaviours.

All 3 training providers have had their individual results from Survey 1 to Survey 2 and will continue to work on developing best practices. Employer providers have agreed to look at their own practices for comparison but did not engage in the surveys.

- 1. Mentoring an apprentice** – Partners sent a range of training materials used to train mentors of apprentices. These were combined and a one- day course developed and trialled by Seta on 11th August 2023. A handbook was devised as part of the resources.

Key Outcome – Product - Mentoring an Apprentice 1 Day Course with Handbook

Key Outputs – 11 mentors trained at SETA. The feedback was excellent.

Quotes



“will benefit any company looking to progress and support apprentices”.

“I feel much more prepared to help learners and able to understand what is needed from me and expected from the learner”.

“there are so many things I’ve have learned which I wish I had known 6 months ago at the start of working with my apprentice”.

“this course has opened my eyes as to the number of stages an apprentice will go through as part of their learning. I aim to support them further on their journey”.

Section Feedback

A. Developing Yourself as A Mentor	<i>“I liked self-assessing myself against the KSBs”.</i> <i>“Looking at myself and what I wanted to learn – Self-Assessment”.</i> <i>“Clarity on benefits and different roles”</i>
B. Duty of Care	<i>“Explanation around Safeguarding aspect”</i> <i>“Really good explanation of the difference between H & S and Safeguarding”.</i> <i>“Safeguarding – learned how to report and follow up”.</i>
C. Understanding Apprenticeships	<i>“Understanding all the people/organisations in the apprenticeship”.</i> <i>“Really good explanation of how this works and should work”.</i> <i>“A lot of background information on apprenticeships”</i>
D. Practical Tools to Use	<i>“I like the STTARR template to use as a record with the apprentice”.</i> <i>“Really helpful”</i>

“Will help me keep on track with my involvement with my apprentice”.

“Learned a lot, very informative”.

E. Scenarios and Tactics

“Enjoyable and good to practise real scenarios”.

“Good and simple way to understand how to carry out any issues that come to light and document these”.

“Good to have 2 options – STTARR and GROW”.

PETA and AMRC have adapted the materials to their documentation and have tested the course.

Seta has such a waiting list that there are planned events on 10th October and 7th November 2023.

Project Outputs

- Progress Review New Format & Process (May 2023)
- Level 3 Machining Apprenticeship Standard Delivery Model (May 2023)
- Mentoring an Apprentice Handbook & Presentation (July 2023)
- Cost of Recruiting An Engineering Apprentice Report (August 2023)
- Better Employer Engagement in Progress Reviews Report (September 2023)

Future Activity

Level 3 Machining Apprenticeship Standard Delivery Model

- This is now being delivered as part of the new standard.
- All partners liked the simplicity of planning and communication of this delivery model.
- AMRC, Peta and Seta are adapting this for other Apprenticeship standards.
- Ofsted endorsement for Seta’s approach in the Ofsted report June 2023

Progress Review New Format & Process (May 2023)

- Seta is fully operational with this format and process since May/June 2023 and will adapt for in-centre block release learners in 2023-24
- AMRC and Peta have adopted a similar approach and have seen an increase in employer engagement as a result.
- Ofsted endorsement for Seta’s approach in the Ofsted report June 2023

Mentoring an Apprentice Handbook & Presentation (July 2023)

- Seta has run 3 courses by the end of the project with very good feedback.
- Seta will train another trainer and will expect all apprentices to have a trained mentor in 2023-24 academic year – and assess the impact.
- Peta – has adopted the course and will run with its mentors.
- AMRC – has adopted the course and will trial online delivery.

Cost of Recruiting An Engineering Apprentice (August 2023)

- Seta has shared with partners and with AELP and GTA England who will use the findings to support future funding discussions.

GTA England Operational Group – will share the findings to assess if the products can be adopted by its members considering poor Ofsted apprenticeship grades.

Recommendations for effective collaborative partnership working to address quality improvement in apprenticeship delivery.

1. **Address the real costs of recruiting (and losing) an engineering apprentice** – for employers and training providers to work more closely together to offset this high hidden cost of apprentice attrition. With rates around 35% of engineering apprentices leaving their programmes, the first point must be closer employer engagement in the apprenticeship standards and process. (See Cost of Recruiting An Engineering Apprentice Report August 2023).
2. **Better employer and apprentice understanding of the training plan/delivery model** – employers to better understand through simplified delivery models how the standards work. When questioned, many employers did not understand the delivery model, the Gateway, or the End Point Assessment. A simplified delivery model is crucial so that employer and apprentice understand the required progress throughout the apprenticeship. Without employers or apprentices understanding how the standards are set up with Gateway and EPA, then they cannot truly engage in the process. (See Delivery Model Machining L3).
3. **Better employer contribution to quarterly progress reviews** – again, to better engage employers in the apprenticeships and for apprentices to feel truly valued, it is critical that the progress review is seen as a very important quarterly monitor. New progress review document in 4 parts – A, B, C, D. Different process whereby the employer is sent Part B and the apprentice Part A, prior to the progress review appointment. Revised process increases the engagement, the target-setting and better understanding of the apprenticeship journey. (See Progress Review Part A, B, C, D and Progress Review Report).
4. **Better employer mentoring of apprentices in the workplace** – the newly devised handbook and presentation in five sections; A. Developing Yourself as A Mentor, B. Duty of Care, C. Understanding Apprenticeships, D. Practical Tools to Use and E.

Scenarios and Tactics. Training providers should consider running more mentor training courses to better engage employers in apprenticeships.

5. **For funding and government bodies** – with 35% attrition in engineering apprenticeships, it is critical that the cost of recruitment is considered in funding models. Also, that strict ESFA and funding guidelines are challenged e.g., when engineering apprentices move between standards due to employer demand. Also, the “break in learning” – could this be more flexible to allow apprentices to come back to learning if they originally leave.
6. **For training providers** – to look at good practice from the training plan/delivery model, the progress review, and the mentoring handbook – to increase the level of employer engagement to correlate to increased retention and achievement.

Where can colleagues find more information?

The lead contact for this project is Karen Brown (Blackburn), Quality & Projects

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