

News story: First year celebrations for the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network

The event, held during National Apprenticeship Week 2018 at the House of Commons, welcomed Helen Grant MP and Chair of the [Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network \(ADCN\)](#) along with existing and new member employers and apprentices. Addressing the audience alongside Helen Grant were Neil Bentley from WorldSkills, Jodie Williams from Yorkshire Water, Gp Capt Steve Dharamraj from the Royal Air Force and Mike Thompson from Barclays, Elaine Billington from United Utilities and Claire Paul from the BBC, alongside Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service.

Speaking at the event, and discussing the impact of the network since its launch during National Apprenticeship Week 2017, Helen Grant MP said:

It is wonderful to celebrate the impact of the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network over the past 12 months. We now have over 50 employers in the network who are all committed to ensuring that their workforce includes apprentices, from all backgrounds, as well as pledging to tell other employers about the powerful impact apprentices can bring.

I am delighted that the hard work we have undertaken to increase the number of apprentices from diverse backgrounds is making a difference and our impact report, launched today, highlights this success.

Having so many ADCN members in the room, alongside new members, is great for the network and for apprenticeships and it's great to celebrate our success as part of National Apprenticeship Week 2018.

National Apprenticeship Week 2018 – themed 'Apprenticeships Work' – is the 11th annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships and during the week employers and apprentices from across England will come together to showcase the success of apprenticeships whilst encouraging even more people to choose apprenticeships as a pathway to a great career.

New members of the ADCN were also announced today – including Channel 4, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, and ITV.

Gp Capt S J Dharamraj from Commandant Royal Air Force Central Training School said:

Diversity is of absolute paramount importance to the RAF, and indeed to our apprenticeship programme.

Greater Diversity in our workforce allows us to draw on a range of different experiences, select the best recruits, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, and better reflect the society we seek to protect. Improving diversity and inclusion is in itself a challenge but we are working hard through our outreach programmes and our own diversity champions to ensure we inform communities of what an apprenticeship provides to the RAF and the benefits that apprenticeships can bring to them – in sum, what it means to be an RAF apprentice.

We are proud to stand up as a champion, and work with other members of the network to ensure we deliver lasting and positive change.

The event concluded with news that the new parent's apprenticeship information leaflets are now being produced in Polish and Punjabi. The event also highlighted developments to show the Disability Confident logo on apprenticeship vacancies on [find an apprenticeship](#), the service for searching and applying for apprenticeships. This will help support Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) by giving them the facility to search for appropriate apprenticeship opportunities and will be fully functional by April 2018.

Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service concluded:

The 11th National Apprenticeship Week is well underway and it is magnificent that we can recognise the employers committed to apprenticeships diversity as part of our week long celebration of all things apprenticeships.

It is important that workforces reflect the community they serve and these employers are working to ensure that the reach of apprenticeships is extended to diverse groups. Apprenticeships work – for individuals, employers, for local communities and for the economy – and the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network is working hard to make sure this message is being spread to secure a more diverse workforce for the future.

You can find images from the event on the [National Apprenticeships Service Flickr page](#).