

News story: Second birthday celebrations for the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network

From impacting positively on the uptake of apprenticeships in the Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) community to supporting learners with learning difficulties and disabilities – including mental health – the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) has much to celebrate as it reaches its second birthday.

The ADCN is proud to be celebrating having over 70 members, made up of committed apprentice employers, spanning in size and sector, and representative of British business today. ADCN members champion apprenticeships and diversity amongst employers, by encouraging more people from underrepresented groups to consider apprenticeships.

The work of ADCN members, including Persimmon Homes, Lloyds Banking Group, Bristol City Council and Health Education England, is designed to ensure a fairer, more diverse apprenticeship landscape.

An [addendum to the ADCN first year report](#) has been published to highlight some of the achievements from the past 12 months. This includes information on the many projects ADCN members have undertaken to improve apprenticeship diversity in their communities.

Highlights from the past 12 months include:

- an increase in BAME uptake, increasing to 11.24% representation in apprenticeships and closing the gap between the start point of the apprenticeships reforms programme, and the government target of a 20% increase by 2020
- growth in learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, increasing to 11.24% representation, up from 10.29% last year – this puts the nation on target to achieving a 20% increase by 2020
- expanding to include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender+ (LGBT+) as one of its core focuses and ensuring that LGBT+ apprentices are provided with a safe and supportive environment to work in by their employers
- recognising people from poorer socio-economic backgrounds that are less likely to progress into higher-wage fields, or further into leadership roles and ensuring the apprenticeships offer is open to this group
- being passionately committed to improving female representation in historically male-dominated sectors and improving representation of women at more senior levels, whilst realising there is more to do for women who are still extremely under-represented in STEM subjects – representing only around 11.3% starts in STEM subjects.

ADCN member Paul Broadhead, Head of Community Investment & Education Outreach at Rolls Royce said:

At Rolls-Royce we are committed to inspiring and equipping a future generation of innovators & pioneers. Every child whatever their background, gender, ethnicity deserves the opportunity to explore the world of STEM and understand how it might be for them.

Talent is equally distributed across our young people. Opportunity is not and we are committed to changing this.

Chair of the ADCN, Helen Grant MP, added:

The work of ADCN members is to ensure a fairer, more diverse apprenticeship landscape and I am so proud of what we have achieved in the past two years. Our membership is steadily growing as we welcome new employers with a real commitment to diversity in apprenticeships.

Our progress shows what can be achieved with the ambition and determination to open up apprenticeships to the communities that are sadly, under represented. I am confident that as the network continues to go from strength to strength, through the continued dedication from our members, that we will continue to see more diversity in the uptake of apprenticeships and from the employers who offer them.

I am delighted to have been part of the network that has opened doors for so many apprentices who didn't believe fulfilling their dreams was possible.

Apprenticeship and Skills Minister Anne Milton concluded:

It's fantastic that our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network has achieved so much in two years. No one should be denied the opportunity to learn new skills and go on to have a great job and career. It's great work like this that is helping to open up opportunities for all.

We've completely overhauled apprenticeships in this country and have made sure progress – it's encouraging to see the proportion of people from BAME backgrounds starting an apprenticeship in 2017/18 has remained at the seven year high of 11.2%. However, there is much more to do to make sure people from all backgrounds do not miss out – our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions are leading the way.

More information on the [ADCN](#) can be found on GOV.UK.