Explanatory notes for the West Midlands Apprenticeships data analysis packs

West Midlands Regional Observatory

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1 Background

The Economic Inclusion Panel identified access to high level accessible information on apprenticeships as a major gap for public and private sector leaders.

The Observatory was commissioned, through the Economic Inclusion Panel research programme, to work with the National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) to develop a high level data analysis pack on behalf of the Panel's Young People's Task and Finish Group. The aim of the pack is to provide an easily accessible view of the supply and demand for apprenticeships in each locality, for use by Local Authority Chief Executives and business leaders.

1.1 Aims

The data analysis pack has been designed to be:

- high level – the audience is Local Authority Chief Executives, business leaders, and LEPs;
- consistent – with the information presented in the same way for each local area;
- concise – a set of slides are provided for each local area covering key performance information.

The Young People's Task and Finish Group recommended that the packs should cover four key issues:

- level of vacancies;
- rates of attrition;
- supply and demand; and
- distribution of opportunities.

1.2 The packs

A dashboard is available for England, the West Midlands and for **each** unitary local authority area.

In addition, for each unitary local authority area, there is also a set of PowerPoint slides.

The packs are available to download from the WMRO website.

1.3 Coverage

For each locality, the packs provide benchmarked information on:

- volume of apprenticeships and uptake by size of population;
- attrition and completion rates;
- take-up of apprenticeships by age, gender and ethnicity;
- applicants per apprenticeship vacancy;
- apprenticeships by subject area.

Additionally, for England and the West Midlands:

- apprenticeships by industry sector and by size of employer

2 Data source

All the data sued has been drawn from the National Apprenticeships Service database and covers the academic year 2009/10 (September 2009 to August 2010).

All charts include data on apprentices resident in the West Midlands. Their employer and learning provider may be within or outside the West Midlands. Similarly, the local authority charts contain data on apprentices resident in that authority.

3 Definitions

Completion – NAS definition (based on predicted year of completion at the time of apprenticeship start)

Working age – people aged 16 to 64 at the time that they start their apprenticeship.

Vacancies – vacancies advertised on the NAS vacancy system only. These are estimated to account for approximately 25% of total apprenticeship vacancies.

Apprenticeship levels -

	Equivalent NVQ level	Equivalent academic level
Apprenticeship	2	5 GCSEs grades A - C
Advanced apprenticeship	3	A levels
Higher apprenticeship[1]	4	Degree level

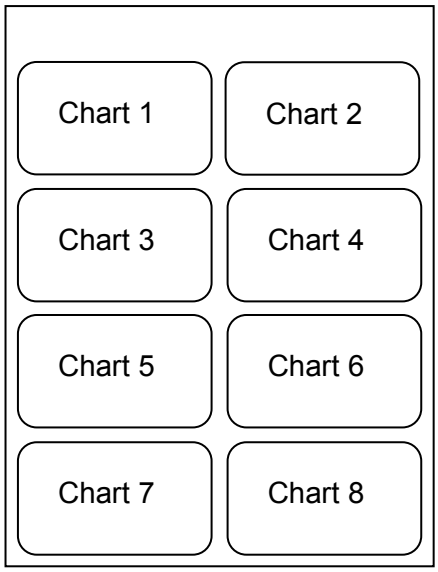
[1] There are a very small number of higher apprenticeships in the West Midlands (less than 15) and these have been added into the advanced apprenticeships category for the purposes of these charts.

4 How to interpret the charts

All of the charts are available in two versions:

- on separate slides in the PowerPoint file
- and also on the dashboard.

This layout guide identifies the chart numbers on the dashboard:



The sections below describe the content of each of the charts and give a guide to how they should be interpreted.

4.1 West Midlands

Chart 1 – New apprentices by sector and size of employer

Covers the West Midlands and provides the number of apprenticeship starts by industry sector and size of employer, defined by the number of employees.

This is the total number of starts and doesn't reflect the relative size of the whole industry i.e. agriculture is a very small industry in the West Midlands, and so we would expect to see a small number of apprenticeships in this sector.

Programme-led apprenticeships are those where the apprentice has started an apprenticeship with a learning provider but an employer has not yet been identified. There will be no new programme-led apprenticeships past April 2011.

Chart 2 - New apprentices per 1,000 employees by sector and size of employer

Shows the same information as chart 1 (i.e. apprenticeship starts in the West Midlands by industry sector and size of employer) but in this chart the size of the industry has been taken into account. So each bar shows the number of apprenticeship starts per 1,000 employees in each industry, split by company size. This means that we are better able to compare the industries and see which ones take the most apprentices for their size. **For example, the agriculture sector takes the second highest number of apprenticeships, for its size, of all the industries.**

We can also see whether smaller employers (less than 50 employees) or larger employers (more than 50 employees) in each industry take proportionally more apprentices.

The data on the number of employees in each sector is from the ONS Annual Business Inquiry.

4.2 Local Authority in context

Chart 3 – Quality and completion

This chart puts each local authority in context with others in the West Midlands in terms of completion levels and the quantity of apprenticeships in each area.

Completion describes the proportion of people leaving an apprenticeship who have completed all elements of it. This is equivalent to the measure of success used by NAS. There are a range of reasons why people might not complete their apprenticeship. They may have left early without completing any elements of the apprenticeship or they may just have failed one element of the apprenticeship. We are unable to distinguish between these two groups of leavers.

Quantity shows the number of apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population. In this way the size of each local authority is taken into account so that we can make comparisons between them.

Chart 4 – Applicants per vacancy

Presents the number of applicants per vacancy advertised on the NAS vacancy system. It is important to note that not all apprenticeship vacancies are advertised on this system and NAS estimates that it includes approximately 25% of all apprenticeship vacancies.

The data in this chart does not cover the same time period as the other charts.

4.3 Local Authority

Chart 5 – New apprentices per 1,000 population by apprenticeship subject area

Shows the number of apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age people in the relevant local authority in each subject area. The subject areas listed are the most popular ones but there are a number of other subjects (with far fewer apprenticeship starts) which are grouped together as 'other'.

The red line provides a benchmark of the West Midlands.

Chart 6 – Apprenticeship leavers by age and achievement

Chart 6 presents the total numbers of people leaving apprenticeships in the local authority broken down by 'achievers' and 'other leavers'.

Achievers are apprentices who have completed all of the elements of their apprenticeship (the same as 'completion' in chart 3). 'Other leavers' are those who have not completed all elements of the apprenticeship; they may have left after a month or left at the end of the apprenticeship but not completed all of the elements. This information is split into age groups and level of apprenticeship.

Chart 7 – New apprentices per 1,000 population by age and gender

This chart shows a breakdown of apprenticeship starts by age and gender in the relevant local authority area. These are presented per 1,000 population in each group. So, for example, the number of 16-18 year old males starting an apprenticeship is a proportion of the total number of 16-18 year old males living in that local authority area.

Chart 8 – Who's starting apprenticeships?

Covers the number of apprenticeship starts in the local authority area by ethnicity, age and gender. The inner circles show a breakdown of who is starting apprenticeships in that local authority area, and the outer circles show a breakdown of the population for the same area. By comparing the inner and outer circles we can determine whether certain groups are under- or over-represented amongst apprentices.