



Inspiring the Future of Apprenticeships

Fourth edition of Redrow's annual apprenticeships report which analyses the state of apprenticeships and construction careers in the UK.

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Executive summary

by Karen Jones, Group HR Director

The challenge of attracting a new generation of talent is a topic all too familiar to the construction industry. This is fuelled by uncertainty around access to skilled labour from the EU following Brexit and the difficulties of replacing an ageing workforce, with latest statistics suggesting the sector will have a gap in its workforce of over 150,000 people by 2022¹.

Against this backdrop, building in Britain is set to ramp up. Boris Johnson's majority government has earmarked tens of billions of pounds for infrastructure spending over the next five years² – including at least one million new homes, roadbuilding and improvements and major rail projects. However, none of this will be possible without the manpower to deliver. Upskilling and reskilling the workforce and creating a robust pipeline of new talent is of critical importance to the post-Brexit UK economy.

Part of the problem of attracting young people to construction, and more specifically housebuilding, are the prevalent misconceptions in schools, universities and society at large about what the industry does and therefore what a career in construction can offer.

Now in its fourth year, Redrow's annual report analyses the barriers to entry-level recruitment into the construction and the housebuilding sector, as well as Redrow's recommendations to overcome these. This year, we once again canvassed 2,000 parents and young people, as well as 100 of our apprentices, and benchmarked our findings against previous years.

We reveal that there are still fundamental barriers in place. While there has been improvement in some respects, in others, the statistics are moving in the wrong direction. We found that more young people and parents are aware of the benefits of apprenticeship schemes, especially the potential for financial freedom and career development, and more parents have discussed the possibility of an apprenticeship scheme with their child. However, fewer young people this year say that they have given a career in construction any consideration.

Fewer parents have spoken to their child about this career option and young people are still saying they do not – for the most part – receive adequate information from teachers and careers advisers.

Despite a wealth of initiatives in place to destigmatise construction careers, they are not yet seen as desirable enough by young people and their parents, which is then exacerbated by the careers advice often received in schools.

Changing perceptions and educating both children and parents plays a major role in shifting the status quo. It requires a more joined-up approach which engages with young people across the country, to promote accurate perceptions of what careers in construction and apprenticeships involve and their benefits.

We cannot afford to get this wrong, which is why we are so committed to investing in the next generation of construction industry talent.

We're aware that the graduates and apprentices of today could go on to become the business leaders of the future and we believe that there is a real opportunity to innovate in the way apprenticeships are being delivered. Therefore, we have made three pragmatic recommendations on how the system can be improved:

- 1. A more collaborative approach between schools, government and parents**
- 2. Introduce an apprenticeship living wage**
- 3. Revise assessment of maths and English skills to an applied assessment**



1: <https://www.ciob.org/blog/changing-perceptions-careers-construction>
2: <https://www.ft.com/content/0acabafa-1f4c-11ea-b8a1-584213ee7b2b>

Careers in construction and apprenticeships

Changing perceptions

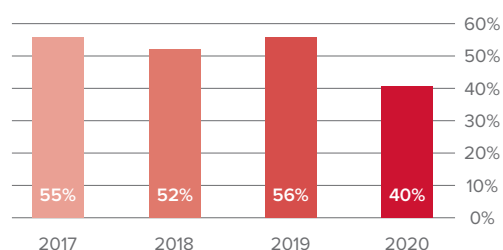
This year we once again asked parents, young adults and our own apprentices about their perceptions of apprenticeships and careers in the construction industry.

Only if perceptions change will we see hiring trends move in the right direction.

We were particularly interested to find out how much attitudes had shifted since we started our annual survey in 2017, as well as the barriers apprentices are facing to completing their apprenticeship, and how young adults think that the UK's apprenticeship system could be reformed to encourage more young adults into roles in the future.

Perceptions and misconceptions in 2020

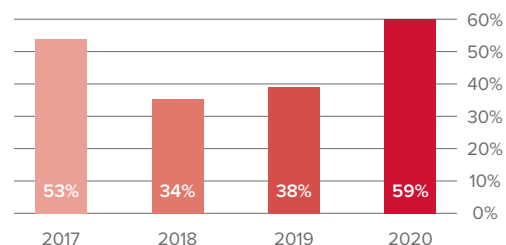
Although misconceptions about careers in construction remain prevalent, they are improving. As a result of combined efforts to convince society that construction is not just for boys, fewer young people (44%) and parents (48%) now believe a career in construction is dominated by men, compared with previous years. In addition, fewer young people believe that a career in construction involves mainly manual labour (40%). Perceptions are moving in the right direction, albeit slowly.



Proportion of young people who believe a career in construction involves mainly manual labour

Despite perceptions becoming more positive, the number of young people who have never given a career in construction any consideration is at its highest in four years (52%). This rose to 62% of females, eight percentage points higher than in 2019. It seems gender stereotypes remain, despite several industry initiatives which are spearheading change, such as #NotJustForBoys, Changing the Face of Construction and Go Construct. Raising the profile of female construction workers to help encourage others into the profession is key to improving these statistics. While construction remains a male-dominated industry, the workforce is, at last, becoming more gender diverse and there are now more women in senior construction roles than ever before, with numbers having more than doubled since 2005. Despite this, only 16% of senior roles are held by women industry-wide³. This needs to change if we are going to see an increase in the number of women interested in joining the sector.

While consideration of a career in construction is at a low, interest in undertaking an apprenticeship is on the up. This year, the majority (68%) of young people stated that they would consider applying for an apprenticeship scheme or are already partaking in one. Similarly, most (70% of) parents say they have discussed undertaking an apprenticeship with their child. However, this number has remained consistent on the year.



Proportion of Redrow apprentices who don't think there is a stigma attached to being an apprentice

Perceptions have also changed amongst our own apprentices. This year, 59% believe that there is no stigma associated with being an apprentice. This is the highest amount in four years – and 21 percentage points higher than last year.

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3: <https://www.randstad.co.uk/job-seeker/areas-of-expertise/construction-property/women-in-construction/>

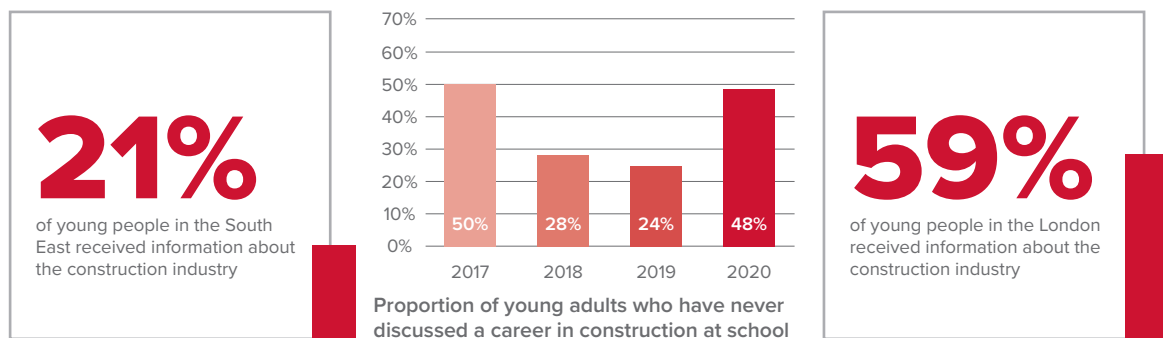
Motivators and barriers

Schools are still failing students

Key to inspiring the next generation of construction professionals is the careers advice that is offered in schools. The advice provided has been under scrutiny in recent years in terms of quality and thoroughness, as successive governments have acted not only to improve the quality of technical education, but also to ensure that it is recognised as equally valid and important as traditional academic routes.

Once again, our findings reveal that young people, on the whole, are receiving inadequate advice in the classroom. When asked, only 22% stated that they had received high quality information and advice on a wide range of careers at school and feel well-guided and, and this year, more young people than ever before said that the advice they received was either non-existent or entirely not useful (14%).

When asked if a career in construction had ever been discussed with them verbally by a teacher or a careers adviser, almost half (48%) said it had not. This is higher than two years prior. Similarly, the number who said that apprenticeships had been discussed with them at school has fallen to the lowest number in four years (58%).



As a result of a lack of careers advice, most of our own apprentices found out about the roles at Redrow via friends or family (37%), even though the majority (62%) of our apprentices have come to us straight from full-time education.

Regional differences exist when it comes to careers advice. Young people based in London and the North East were significantly more likely to have discussed a career in construction at school than young people based in other parts of the UK. Young people in London were also significantly more likely to have received information about apprenticeships (59%) compared to young people in the South East (21%, the lowest).

Gender stereotypes are also still present when encouraging and informing young people on construction careers. **Only 29% of female respondents had discussed construction careers at school compared to 43% of young males.** Change needs to happen throughout the education system to ensure that young people are not being consciously or unconsciously discouraged from studying subjects based solely on their gender.

To help change these perceptions, we have been busy training more than 130 Redrow employees from across our divisions to become school ambassadors. The aim is for these ambassadors to form partnerships with primary and secondary schools within their respective regions and educate both the teachers and the students on the opportunities available. Our ambassadors are passionate about inspiring the next generation to build and are committed to helping bridge the skills gap within construction.

However, schools' support of the apprenticeship route in general has improved. **This year, almost a third (31%) of our own apprentices agreed that schools encourage apprenticeships as much as they do other routes.** While this may seem low, this is a marked improvement on the year before when only 6% of our apprentices agreed with this statement.

This could in part be due to The Baker clause, which compels schools to open their doors to further education providers to let them advertise their services to pupils and has now been in effect for two years. All schools must now publish a policy statement outlining how providers can access young people at schools, the rules for granting and refusing access, and what providers can expect once granted access.

“

Inspiring the next generation to build is a key priority for us and we're committed to broadening the career horizons of young people and giving them insight into the wide range of jobs and rewarding careers the modern construction industry has to offer.

We are working to build strategic partnerships with schools and working hard to dismantle the misconstrued and out-dated perception that many teachers, parents and young people have of the industry. Still 2 in 5 young people believe that a job in construction involves mainly manual labour, when in fact, our apprenticeships and graduate programmes offer roles in commercial, planning and administration, which do not involve manual labour at all. ”

Celia Williams
Engagement Manager at Redrow



“

I wanted to be a schools ambassador for Redrow so I could help inspire the next generation of construction workers, and to encourage a change in perceptions, by educating children on the diversity within the industry. I remember having little idea about construction roles when I was a similar age to the school children we have been speaking too. And even now, when I speak to my teenage daughter, it's clear that we need to provide the next generation with the information they need to make an informed decision about their future.

We have a skills shortage in the industry which is not going to be solved overnight. I believe that it is our responsibility as a major housebuilder to do all we can to replace those skills and to encourage more young people to take an interest in our business. It's fantastic to have the opportunity to help educate young people through the ambassador programme at Redrow. ”

Peter Lewis
Customer Services Manager and School Ambassador

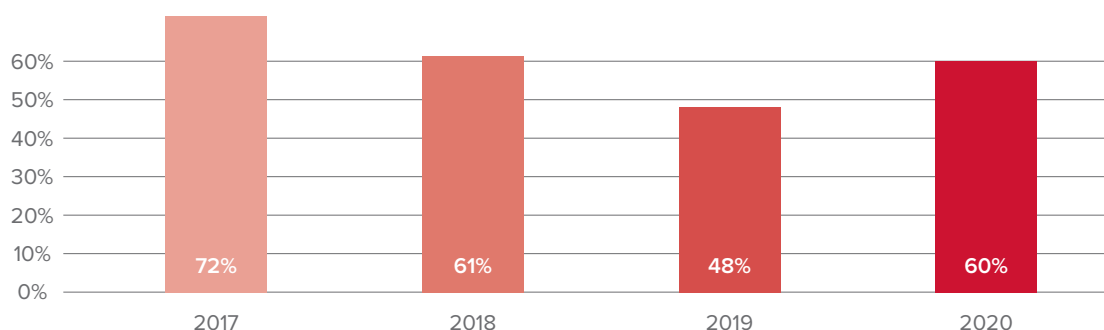


The role of parents in career choices

Parents are the number one influence on their child's early career decisions, but they are still lacking the appropriate knowledge to provide careers advice. A recent study conducted by EY found that over one third of parents had reservations when discussing career options with their child as they were scared of advising wrongly⁴, and half worry that their level of understating of today's changing career landscape may hinder their child's future.

When asked in our research, 60% of parents stated that they had never discussed the prospect of undertaking a career in construction with their child. This is 12 percentage points higher than last year (48%). In fact, 12% stated that they would actively discourage their children from pursuing a career in construction. This is the highest proportion since our survey began.

But despite parents' increased tendency to deter their child from pursuing a career in construction, fathers are now more likely than before to have discussed construction careers with their child (48%), compared to mothers (32%).



Proportion of parents who have never discussed a career in construction with their child

Now, almost half (45%) of young people say that their parents have never discussed a career in construction with them. This is nine percentage points higher than 2019, and seven percentage points higher than the year before.

However, our findings also revealed regional disparities among parents. Parents based in London are far more likely to discuss a career in construction with their child (63%) compared with the East of England, where just 18% of parents stated they would. Differences also emerged when examining the annual income for parents. Households with an income less than £35,000 and more than £100,000 were far less likely to discuss construction careers than households earning between £35,000 to £75,000.

When it comes to apprenticeships in general, parents are, in the majority of cases, happy to support their child. A significant majority (70%) stated that they have discussed the prospect of undertaking an apprenticeship with their child – this rises to 77% in London, and 76% in Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

Helping parents to understand the breadth of jobs in construction is vital to encouraging uptake among more young people.



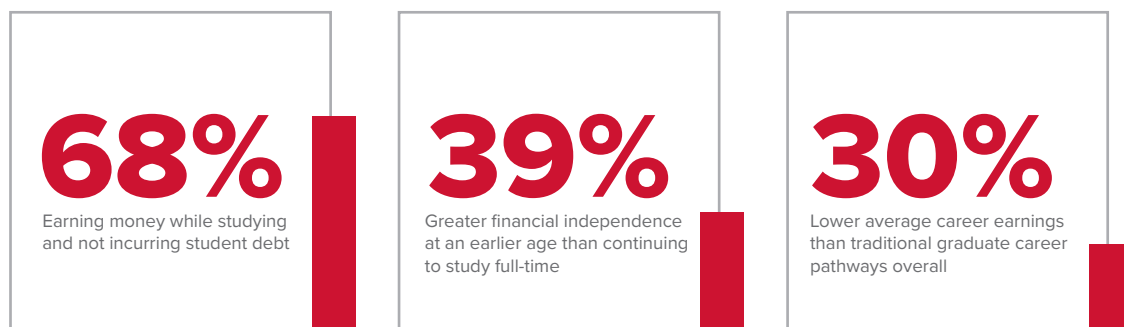
4: <https://ukcareers.ey.com/students/career-advice/parental-advice/survey-findings-across-the-uk>

Financial implications

The financial benefits of undertaking an apprenticeship are well understood by both young people and their parents and are increasingly well-perceived. When asked what financial implications they associated with undertaking an apprenticeship, a significant 68% of young people stated they best associate the role with “earning money while studying and not incurring student debt”. This is a statement that over half (52%) of our own apprentices agreed with.

Similarly, 39% of young people believe that gaining greater financial independence at an earlier age is the biggest financial implication associated with doing an apprenticeship. Our own apprentices agree; 22% stated this to be the biggest factor.

Top three financial implications associated with doing an apprenticeship:



However, when asked what incentives could be deployed to encourage more young people to study an apprenticeship, both parents and young people agreed that monetary incentives were the most important. Approximately 50% of parents and 49% of young people said that an increase in starting wages would be the biggest motivation. Young people also believe that providing a travel card to and from work and offering additional bursaries for the purchase of necessary tools and equipment, would be significant incentives. Monetary incentives are considered of greater importance to lower income parents with 57% of parents earning a household income below £35,000 citing increased starting wages would be a significant incentive. This compares to just 48% earning between £35,000 and £75,999 and 27% earning between £125,000 and £149,999.

It's important to note at this juncture that further rises to the apprenticeship minimum wage will take place from 1st April 2020.

Barriers to completing an apprenticeship scheme

There has been a huge commitment from the industry and government alike to increasing and widening participation in apprenticeships. But if apprenticeships are to have credibility with both employers and would-be apprentices there is also a need to ensure that mechanisms are in place to help apprentices complete their training.

More than 30% of people who start apprenticeships in Britain do not complete them, and numbers are worsening every year⁵. This high level of non-completion is a waste of resource and time for the apprentices, employers and the government, and more needs to be done to improve the numbers.

This year, as well as looking at the barriers to taking on an apprenticeship, we also looked at the barriers to completing an apprenticeship.

We found that although our own apprentices and young adults overwhelmingly associate apprenticeships with positive financial implications, when asked about the barriers to completing training, the most popular response (42%) was that the apprenticeship salary is not enough to support yourself.

The decision to undertake an apprenticeship rather than remain in full-time education results in a reduction of household benefits and eligibility to be exempt from council tax for over 18s, compared with choosing to remain in full-time education.

The national minimum wage for apprentices will rise by 6.4% from £3.90 to £4.15 in April 2020, as part of Boris Johnson's "biggest ever cash boost to the minimum pay levels". While this will come as welcome news to the industry, this does not even cover rent for a young person under 19 not living with their parents, or a mature starter in their first year of training. Conversely, the national minimum wage for any 18-year-old in a non-training role is £6.15 – a much more attractive proposition. By implementing an "Apprenticeship Living Wage", embarking on an apprenticeship will be more manageable for many.

Additionally, our own apprentices cited having to obtain a maths and English qualification to complete their apprenticeship as a barrier. From experience we know that apprentices often complete their NVQ qualification but fail to finish the highly theoretical maths and English assessments. For many, the draw of an apprenticeship is being able to kick-start their career outside of the classroom, but struggle when faced with theoretical exams yet again.

In 2017, the Department for Education adjusted the minimum requirements for a defined group of people with learning difficulties and disabilities who can meet the occupational standard of their apprenticeship but will struggle to achieve the regular English and maths minimum requirements. We argue that if assessment of maths and English was switched from a theoretical exam, to an applied assessment tailored to the requirement of a specific apprenticeship, completion rates would be much higher.

Top three barriers that apprentices face to completing a training scheme:



5: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/25080-apprenticeship-dropouts-are-as-important-as-university-ones>



George Coulthard

19-year-old apprentice electrician, George Coulthard, is currently based at Redrow's Regents Grange development in Chester. Originally from nearby Great Sutton, George joined the apprenticeship programme in 2018 after two years at college.

George said:



I was never the most academic and have always been better with work that is more hands on. After finishing my GCSEs at 16, the only options that my school presented to me were carrying on to Sixth Form or studying at a nearby college. Given that I knew I did not want to go to University, working for an NVQ at college seemed like my only option.



While studying for his qualification at college, George was required to find work experience and was put in contact with Redrow. Following two stints of work experience, George was asked if he would be interested in becoming a Redrow apprentice.

George continued, "Although I enjoyed my time at college, I wish I had known about apprentice roles earlier. Then, I could have proactively applied straight after finishing my GCSEs and could have been employed by the business much earlier on. It seems as if those who have friends or family in the industry are at the biggest advantage. But for those with no knowledge of apprenticeships or how to apply, finding the right information can be daunting. Schools definitely need to push this option as much as they do other routes, and better educate young people about apprenticeships and careers in construction."

While studying for his level 3, George has been living at his nearby family home, so his financial outgoings are minimal. But he noted that for other apprentices on site who do pay a form of rent, finances are more of a struggle. He said, "friends of mine would certainly benefit from a salary that better suits their living situation. A wage that is more calculated on the cost of living could encourage many more young people, and older aspiring apprentices, to apply."

Recommendations



Collaborative approach

A more collaborative approach between schools, government and parents is vital in encouraging construction careers and to overcome the skills barrier. At Redrow we have been building strategic partnerships with schools via our schools ambassadors programme to educate both teachers and students on the opportunities available. We recommend that this programme is launched on a national level and backed by government in order to reach the maximum number of young people possible. We also need to get better at talking to parents. Parents frequently attend Sixth Form and University open days with their children, so the industry should work together to create high profile 'Open Doors' days for parents and their children in order to better publicise apprenticeships and careers in construction.



Apprenticeship Living Wage

This year's research explores the incentives that could be implemented to encourage more young people into apprenticeships. Raising the starting wage is seen as the best way to achieve this according to our findings. The national minimum wage for apprentices will rise by 6.4% from £3.90 to £4.15 in April 2020, but we believe this is still not enough for many young people who are having to support themselves, and is putting off many people who could otherwise be attracted to an apprenticeship programme. An apprenticeship living wage which is calculated according to what employees and their families need to live, and that is reflective of the of part of the UK in which they live, would go some way to alleviate the UK's skills shortage.



Revise assessment of maths and English skills

Core maths and English skills are an important part of any job, however at present young people studying for an apprenticeship must obtain at least a C grade at GCSE level in both subjects. Unfortunately, many apprentices struggle to achieve these qualifications, leading to a high number who fail to complete their qualification. We recommend that maths and English taught as part of an apprenticeship is reviewed to ensure that they are as relevant to an apprentice's role as possible. For example, we recommend switching to a model of applied assessment, which is tailored specifically to meet the requirements of an individual apprenticeships, rather than a theoretical exam.



Methodology

Research of 1,001 young people aged 16-21 and 1,001 parents conducted on behalf of Redrow by 4media, December 2019 – January 2020. Young people are defined as people aged between 16-21 throughout the report.

An online survey of 100 of Redrow's apprentices was conducted January 2020. All Redrow regions are represented.

Appendix

Young people:

N = 1001; Target Audience = ages 16-21 years of age; UK population.

Perceptions of careers in construction

- Over half (52%) of young people say they have never given a career in construction any consideration. This stat has been increasing – it stood at 38% in 2018 and 42% in 2019.
- Almost half (44%) of young people believe the construction sector is dominated by men. Similarly, two in five (40%) believe that a career in construction involves mainly manual labour. This is a slight decrease on 2019 where the results were 52% and 56% respectively.
- Almost half of young people would consider applying for an apprenticeship scheme this year. This has dropped from 54% last year.
- Three in five (60%) either say that their parents have not discussed a career in construction with them, or if they have, their parents don't believe it to be a good option for them. Only 21% of female respondents said their parents think a career in construction would be suitable for them.

Career advice

- Only 22% feel that they received high-quality information and proper guidance and advice on a wide range of careers from their respective schools. This remains consistent on the year.
- Almost half (48%) of young people said that a career in construction (including housebuilding) had never been discussed with them verbally by a teacher or a careers adviser or had been made readily available in careers literature. This compared to 42% in 2019.
- This gap in careers advice is even starker for females, with the majority (55%) stating that a career in construction had never been discussed with them. This has increased from last year, when 49% of females stated that a career in construction had never been discussed with them.
- The majority (58%) stated that their school had outlined information to them on apprenticeships and their benefits. This has fallen slightly on the year (63%).

Financial implications

- Young people (68%) overwhelmingly best associate apprenticeships with 'earning money whilst studying and not incurring student debt'. This represents a three-percentage point increase on the year before.
- Only a third of the young people (30%) we surveyed associate apprentices with 'lower average career earnings than traditional graduate career pathways overall.
- A further 39% say they bring greater financial independence at an earlier age than continuing to study full time
- 49% of young people said that an increase in starting wages would be the biggest motivation for more people to take on apprenticeships.

Appendix

Parents:

N = 1001; Target Audience = Parents; UK population.

Perceptions of careers in construction

- Perceptions of the construction industry among parents are moving in the right direction. 33% of parents believe that a career in construction mostly involves manual labour, compared with 45% in 2019.
- Only 48% of parents agreed with the statement “the construction sector is dominated by men” compared with 55% in 2019.
- However overall, fewer parents are speaking with their children over the prospects of working in construction. Only 40% of parents say that they have discussed the prospect of undertaking a career in construction with their child, compared to 52% in 2019.
- Delving deeper into the figures, we can reveal that fathers are significantly more likely (48%) to have discussed a career in construction with their children, versus mothers (32%).

Careers advice

- 33% of parents believe that the National Careers Service is best placed to advise young people on careers option. This compares to 46% last year.
- 70% say they have discussed the prospect of undertaking an apprenticeship with their child. This is four-percentage points lower than last year but is consistent with 2018.

Incentives and barriers to uptake

- 66% of parents believe that the biggest financial incentive for doing an apprenticeship is that an apprentice can earn money while studying and not incur any debt. This compares to 73% who held this belief in 2019.
- While 39% believed the greater potential for their child to be financially independent at an earlier age to be the biggest financial incentive of undertaking an apprenticeship.
- 46% of parents agree that apprentices are more likely than university graduates to gain qualifications and learn skills that are relevant to their career path. This has remained the same as last year. While 34% of parents believe that apprentices have more opportunities than graduates to receive mentoring and coaching in the workplace on what they need to do to succeed.
- 44% of parents agree that apprentices have a greater chance than university graduates of learning a trade where they can start their own business, compared with 37% last year.
- Exactly half (50%) of parents believe that the best incentive to encourage more young people to study for an apprenticeship would be to increase the starting wages for apprenticeships. This compares to 53% of parents last year.
- While 47% of parents agree that the best incentive to increase apprenticeship uptake would be to improve careers advice in schools so that advisors, specialist staff and teachers, can help young people better understand the benefits of studying for an apprenticeship. This compares to 67% last year.

Appendix

Redrow apprentices:

N = 100, UK population

Perceptions of careers in construction

- This year, 59% believe that there is no stigma associated with being an apprentice. This is the highest amount in four years – and 21 percentage points higher than last year.
- Nearly all (98%) of our apprentices are pleased that they opted for an apprenticeship over other educational routes.

Careers advice

- Schools' support of the apprenticeship route in general has improved. This year, almost a third (31%) of our own apprentices agreed that schools encourage apprenticeships as much as they do other routes. While this may seem low, this is a marked improvement on the year before when only 6% of our apprentices agreed with this statement.
- As a result of a lack of careers advice, most of our apprentices found out about their role via friends or family (37%), even though the majority (62%) of our apprentices came straight to Redrow from school. While 20% found out about the role by investigating career options themselves and by finding out about apprenticeships through personal research.

Financial implications

- Financial implications of undertaking an apprenticeship are well received. 52% best associate the role with “earning money while not incurring student debt”, and 22% agree that “gaining greater financial independence at an earlier stage” is the biggest financial implication.

Barriers to completion

- When asked about the barriers to completing training, the most popular response (42%) was that the apprenticeship salary is not enough to support yourself. 27% stated that studying at the same time as learning a trade was the biggest barrier, and 17% stated having to obtain a qualification in maths and/or English.



About Redrow

Redrow was established in 1974 by Steve Morgan CBE with a £5,000 loan from his father and today it is one of the most successful and acclaimed homebuilders in the country. For the year ending 30th June 2019, Redrow built over 6,400 premium new homes across England and Wales, passing the 6,000 milestone for the first time.

Over Redrow's history, spanning more than 45 years, it has earned a unique reputation for quality, building beautiful homes and creating a better way to live. Redrow strives to develop Thriving Communities by Building Responsibly and Valuing People, all while engaging with colleagues and stakeholders. This enables Redrow to deliver significant value to investors and the wider community. Redrow is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a constituent of the FTSE 250 index. For the year ending 30th June 2019, the Group reported a record revenue of £2.1 billion.

In 2020 Redrow is building on its two main waste reduction targets; to reduce construction waste intensity by 10% by 2022 (with 2017 levels as the baseline), and ensure that at least 95% of construction waste is diverted from landfill. Redrow is already making progress on these targets, and since 2017 has reduced waste levels by 4.7%. The company has also launched its 'Mind Your Head' campaign to provide further support and education on mental health for all employees and sub-contractors.

Redrow has achieved the coveted Five Star Customer Satisfaction award from the Home Builders' Federation (HBF) and is one of just eight UK construction companies to be named a Diversity Leader in the Financial Times' inaugural list of European leaders for workplace diversity and inclusion.

Visit [redrow.co.uk](https://www.redrow.co.uk) for more details.



About Redrow careers

Redrow is serious about nurturing young talent. The apprenticeship schemes at Redrow provide young people, as well as those looking to make a career change, the opportunity to kick-start a successful career in a skilled trade, administration, or a technical or commercial role, through on the job training and classroom learning.

As a member of the 5% Club, Redrow is committed to having apprentices, graduates and trainees make up at least 5% of the workforce in the next five years. However, in practice, Redrow goes beyond this with apprentices currently representing over 12% of the total workforce, working towards qualifications through on the job training and classroom learning.

Redrow has fantastic retention rates, and after the scheme is complete typically 5% of apprentices remain with Redrow, and 85% are employed within its supply chain. In 2018, Redrow also rolled out workshops to support those apprentices who wish to become self-employed. All staff and apprentices have the opportunity to study additional qualifications like health and safety certificates.

Visit redrowcareers.co.uk for more details.



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