Runnymede Trust: Ethnicity and Apprenticeships
June 2012

Background
It has been long known that people from ethnic minorities are under-represented on apprenticeship schemes. Data highlighted from the Black Training and Enterprise Group last year showed that:

- Of all apprentices in England in 2009/10, 7% were from an ethnic minority; 1.6% were of mixed ethnicity, 2.9% were Asian, 2% Black and 0.5% Chinese or other ethnic minority (The Data Service, 2011).
- In comparison, 14% of the working age population in England is from an ethnicity minority (Office for National Statistics, 2010).

In addition, whilst some data is available in relation to diversity and apprenticeships, there are some trends which are impossible to accurately measure due to the lack of monitoring and data collection. For example, there remains a gap in the information about how many applicants for apprenticeships are from an ethnic minority, and what proportion of these are successful in comparison with overall success rates. It is crucial that this data is collected in order to understand under-representation of ethnic minorities on apprenticeship schemes.

Current situation
Recent provisional data (August – January 2011/12) on apprenticeship starts are as follows:

- Whilst approximately 16% of 16-24 year olds are from an ethnic minority, only 9.2% of those starting apprenticeships in 2011/12 (August – January) were from a minority ethnic background. In comparison, 89.9% of those starting apprenticeships were white.
- Breaking this down by ethnicity, 3% of apprenticeships started were by Black people (Black Caribbean and Black African groups combined), 3.8% were started by Asian people, and 1.8% were started by those from a mixed ethnic background.

Recent provisional data (August – January 2011/12) on completed apprenticeships shows that:

- Only 8% of those completing apprenticeships in 2011/12 (August – January) were from a minority ethnic background. In comparison, 90.7% of those completing apprenticeships were white.
- Breaking this down by ethnicity, 2.5% of apprenticeships were completed by Black people (Black Caribbean and Black African groups combined), 3.7% were completed by Asian people, and 1.8% were completed by those from a mixed ethnic background.

Unemployment rates
Given the high unemployment rates of some ethnic groups, it is particularly worrying that these groups are not fairly represented on apprenticeship schemes. We would argue
that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people in particular are even more in need of a place on an apprenticeship than the White majority.

For example:

- 55.5% of economically active Black men, aged 16-24, are unemployed. This figure has nearly doubled since 2008. The figure is 44.4% for all Black people aged between 16-24 (ONS 2012).
- For economically active Asian people aged between 16-24, unemployment has risen from 22.8% in 2008 to the current figure of 26.7%. Breaking it down by specific groups, this is 24.2% for Indian young people and 33.6% for Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people (ONS 2012).
- In comparison, the White British youth unemployment rate out of those who are economically active is 20% (ONS 2012).

Success during an apprenticeship

- Ethnic minorities are less likely to be represented on the more prestigious apprenticeship schemes such as construction, engineering and hospitality, although there has been improvement in some areas such as childcare and business administration. (Guardian/BTEG 2011)
- Ethnic minority apprentices are also more likely not to progress to a related job after completion of their framework than other apprentices. They are also less likely than other young people not to gain an apprenticeship after completing a pre-apprenticeship course (National Apprenticeship Service, 2008).

Diversity pilots

We support the work of the National Apprenticeship Service in setting up diversity pilots around the country to increase the number of ethnic minorities in apprenticeships. We are keen for them to report their findings and next steps following the recent completion of the pilots.

Business Innovation and Skills apprenticeships review (June 2012)

We support the announcement of a review of apprenticeships by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. However whilst we support the focus on apprenticeship quality in the terms of reference, we are concerned that there is currently no focus in the review on how to increase the numbers of under-represented groups on apprenticeship schemes. There is also no focus on how to increase representation of ethnic minorities, women and disabled people on schemes such as engineering, construction and similar schemes. http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Jun/richard-review-of-apprenticeships

Recommendations:

- The government should undertake more ethnic monitoring of apprenticeships, particularly in relation to application success rates.
- The government should provide an update on findings and next steps following the completion of its diversity pilots, and should act in response to embed the learning from the pilots to apprenticeships nationally.
- The government’s apprenticeships review should include a focus on increasing the numbers of under-represented groups on apprenticeships schemes.