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THE LOWDOWN ON APPRENTICESHIPS

The future's in their hands

JAMES DONALD
for thelondonpaper

THE Government is investing nearly £1bn in apprenticeships this year as it seeks to nurture the skills that will help drag Britain out of the recession.

And Monday sees the start of the second National Apprenticeship Week, an event to promote the benefit of apprenticeships to both employers and the UK economy.

An apprentice works alongside experienced staff and will typically spend one day a week in a local college to receive further training. Placements can be found in a wide variety of sectors, from accountancy and engineering to the creative industries and sport.

Skills Secretary John Denham told thelondonpaper "An apprenticeship offers a great deal, with the opportunity to get a qualification and gain



BUILDING A CAREER | Sean Crossan got into construction through an apprenticeship

practical skills while being paid. They are valued across the country as a means of investing in your workforce and helping

to prepare for the upturn when it comes."

One in 15 young people is in an apprenticeship, but the aim

is to increase this to one in five by 2020 and Sir Alan Sugar has been wheeled out to head an ad campaign to help boost take-up.

Out of a total of 200,000 people taking apprenticeships, more than 90,000 are aged between 19-24 – an increase of 14.6 per cent on the previous year.

As part of the push to increase apprenticeship numbers in the capital, the London Apprenticeship Company (LAC) is being set up this year, with seven key stakeholders, including Westminster Kingsway College, City of Westminster College and the London Learning and Skills Council.

Unlike most schemes, the LAC will employ apprentices directly and then loan them to employers, while continuing to offer training and support. For general info on apprenticeships, visit apprenticeships.org.uk or call 08000 150 600

The London Apprenticeship Company can be reached at londonapprenticeship.co.uk or by calling 020 7963 8551

CASE STUDY

Sean Crossan, 20, Edgware

■ Course: NVQ Level 3 site carpentry at Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College

"I got an apprenticeship at Raphael Contracting Ltd, who sent me to college to learn the skills I needed on site, and they pay me £300 per week. It starts off with easy jobs such as doing basic joints and I've progressed to a stage now where I'm constructing a roof. We have also learned about health and safety, wood machining, power and hand tools, and had a general overview of the construction industry. Getting the skills I need at college has not only given me the ability to perform on the job, it has also given me lots of confidence. I can see that my boss trusts me enough to give me bigger jobs and more responsibility. My plan is to go on to study site management.

Eventually, I would like to start my own company." Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College, www.wlcc.ac.uk, 0800 980 2175

