

Business



By Nick Hyde

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Apprenticeships help bridge skills gap

OLD-fashioned notions of apprenticeships could be preventing Fylde businesses from securing the workforce they need to in order to respond to the challenging economic climate and emerge competitively from the downturn.

That's the concern of the National Apprenticeship Service, which claims some people still think apprenticeships are only available in more traditional trades, when there are actually more than 190 apprenticeships available in 80 different industries, from accounting through to



nuclear decommissioning. It comes as The Gazette and Beneast's Future Generations campaign, which aims to get 100 young people aged 16 to 18 into schemes in 100 days, gathers pace.

Sue Price, (pictured) regional director at the National Apprenticeship Service, who was at the launch of the campaign at a glittering lunch at the De Vere Hotel, hosted by football legend Sir Geoff Hurst in Blackpool last week, said: "Some people only

associate apprenticeships with blue collar jobs and the perception that apprenticeships only prepare you for a trade is an outdated notion.

"In fact, apprenticeships are used to train people in a wide range of occupations, from traditional skills like joinery through to 21st century careers like developing IT systems and communication technologies."

Wage

Apprenticeships combine training with working and earning a wage, and the National Apprenticeship Service is working to reinforce the importance

of Apprenticeships in bridging the skills gaps and helping employers to maintain a skilled workforce in order to meet the needs of ever-evolving industries.

Sue Price added: "Many people are surprised by the scope of Apprenticeships, and I think it's time to highlight how important apprentices are to a huge range of businesses and how they have an impact on our daily lives through their contributions to the workplace."

For more details on Future Generations, log on to the website www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk or call Beneast Training on



Desperate for skilled workers – See our Jobs Plus section, starting on page 41

The briefing

Children earning up to £1,000 a year

NEARLY one in 10 children is earning almost £1,000 a year through formal and informal jobs, research showed today.

Around nine per cent of children have a part-time job to earn extra money, bringing in an average of £17.93 a week, or £932.36 a year, according to Halifax.

Children are most

likely to earn their extra cash through a paper round at 43 per cent, while 18 per cent work in a shop and 16 per cent wash cars.

But 62 per cent of children aged between eight and 15 also get money from their parents for doing jobs around the house, such as tidying their bedroom, cleaning and washing up.

Garages 'rip off' motorists

ALMOST half of motorists feel they have been "ripped off" by garages, especially younger drivers, according to a new study.

A survey of over 1,000 adults by consumer group Motor Codes showed one in four of those who felt short changed believe they had been over-charged by up to £150.

Car plant to close

MANUFACTURER Bosch is pressing ahead with plans to close a car parts factory in Britain that employs 900 people. The company said its board agreed to close the plant near Cardiff, by the middle of 2011.

Consultation on phasing out production will continue with the plant council, unions and the plant management.

Rapidly expanding Blackpool company hailed massive success

Idea opens door to big business



BIG SUCCESS: Garage Door Restore national sales director Kathryn Benn with an example of their product Picture: ROB LOCK

A BLACKPOOL specialist door company, which launched less than a year ago, has been hailed a massive success.

Garage Door Restore (GDR) opened its first branch in the resort last summer and can now boast more than 30 across the UK.

The company, which has its head office on Whitehills Business Park at Peel, develops environmentally friendly garage doors, using Government

grants, for thousands of its customers.

And the firm has plans to open more businesses over the next year.

The company, which employs six people on the Fylde and more than 100 nationally, is aiming for a further 350 franchises.

It was set up by managing director Ron Benn after he was made redundant and spotted a gap in the market for an affordable solution to the high cost of replacing old or damaged garage doors. A nationwide media campaign has helped bolster

fortunes of the business and has seen GDR open franchises in Scotland and in the home counties.

The company has also been helped out by the Eco Innovation Programme (EIP) which helped reduce installation by up to 30 per cent and offer customers next day service.

Damian Webb, business development director, said: "We have been amazed at how quickly the business has grown. It seems to have really struck a chord with people out there who want to do something with their

garage doors but are finding it too costly.

"We started off with an original idea and it went on from there. We have been really impressed with how the design and development of the product and how has grown.

"Because we are restoring doors instead of replacing them, our products have a clear environ-

mental benefit.

"The EIP support has helped us to streamline our service, which is better for our customers and agents alike.

"We want to grow the network as quickly as possible to take advantage of the current focus on cutting back and money-saving ideas due to the effects of the recession."

Bill backs 'Robin Hood' tax



ACTOR Bill Nighy backed the campaign for a "Robin Hood tax" on banks' financial transactions by playing a cynical City banker in a special film.

The actor (left) teamed up with director Richard Curtis, who he has worked with on Love Actually and The Girl In The Cafe, to make a three-minute film as part of the

campaign for a global tax on banks.

Nighy plays a City banker sitting in a Canary Wharf office, telling an interviewer he believes a Robin Hood tax was "a sweet little idea".

Forced to admit that bankers would only pay 0.05 per cent, and that it would raise billions of pounds for

poor people, Nighy's banker finally concedes that it might not be such a bad idea.

Vote

The film ends with a graphic inviting the viewer to vote Yes or No to the Robin Hood tax on the campaign website robinhoodtax.org.uk.

If you have a business story, contact Nick Hyde, PO Box 20, Avroe House, Avroe Crescent, Blackpool Business Park, Blackpool FY4 2DP. Ring (01253) 400888, ext 2233 or e-mail nick.hyde@blackpoolgazette.co.uk

share watch

Company	Price	+/-	High	Low
AB Foods	890	+13	892	613
BAE Systems	343 ^{3/8}	-3 ⁸	405	306
Balfour Beatty	263 ^{1/4}	+2 ^{1/4}	323 ^{3/4}	244 ^{1/4}
Barclays	277 ^{7/8}	+8 ^{1/2}	383 ^{5/8}	61 ^{3/8}
BP	569 ^{3/4}	+6 ^{1/8}	635 ^{1/2}	404 ^{1/2}
BT Gp	131 ^{3/8}	+3 ⁴	149 ^{5/8}	71 ^{3/8}
JJB Sports	19 ^{3/4}	+3 ⁴	39 ^{1/2}	7 ^{5/8}
Johnston Press	24 ^{1/2}	+1 ^{1/4}	44 ^{1/4}	5 ^{1/8}
M&S	337 ^{1/8}	+2 ^{1/2}	412 ^{3/8}	237 ^{1/4}
National Express	195 ^{3/8}	-1 ^{1/4}	250 ^{3/4}	78 ^{7/8}
National Grid	632	+10	682	515
Northern Foods	57 ^{1/2}	-3 ⁸	74	37
Preston North End	100		127 ^{1/2}	99
R Bank of Scot	32 ^{5/8}	+3 ⁴	57 ^{5/8}	18 ^{1/8}
Sainsbury	318 ^{3/4}	+4	347 ^{3/4}	289 ^{3/4}
Tesco	417 ^{3/4}	+7 ⁸	435 ^{5/8}	306 ^{1/4}
Victrex	806	-18 ^{1/2}	855	460
Whitbread	1373	+18	1443	693 ^{1/2}

exchange rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (A\$)	1.6929	New Zealand (\$)	2.1
Canada (C\$)	1.5921	Norway (kr)	8.813
Czech Rep	27.30	Philippines (ps)	62.13
Denmark (kr)	8.06	Poland (zl)	4.0745
Egypt (pd)	7.618	Singapore (S\$)	2.0695
Euro	1.0861	Sth Africa (rnd)	11.22
Hong Kong (\$)	11.55	Sth Korea (wn)	1582.00
Hungary (ft)	276.66	Sweden (kr)	10.98
India (rp)	64.18	Switzerland (fr)	1.589
Israel (sh)	5.2733	Taiwan (\$)	43.86
Japan (Y)	133.85	Thailand (baht)	46.47
Malaysia (rg)	5.0337	Turkey (lira)	2.2277
Mexico (ps)	18.20	USA (US\$)	1.4952

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