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YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DARK ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS

Research from recommendation service **RatedPeople.com**, conducted by YouGov, has revealed that almost half of 16-25 year olds (48%) have not heard of the National Apprenticeship Service.

With an increasingly competitive job market, and almost half (48%) pupils in England failing to achieve the basic 5 A*-C grades at GCSE level¹, the need for alternative career options has never been greater.

However, despite UK youth unemployment standing at one million people and increasing at a faster rate than any country within the G8², only 22% of 16 – 25 year olds who are not currently working feel an apprenticeship could be their best route into the UK job market.

RatedPeople.com believes more needs to be done to tackle historic attitudes to apprenticeships, as the Attitude Report into the views of 1,000 16-25 year olds in the UK revealed that:

- 45% of UK young people believe that apprenticeships are a source of cheap labour
- Only 19% believe an apprenticeship will lead to a well-respected career
- 72% believe A-Levels and/or college courses are relevant to them personally post GCSE and only 13% believe apprenticeships are relevant, despite the furore over Michael Gove's suggested changes to the current educational system

To raise awareness of the prospects of a career in a trade as a viable avenue of employment and to tackle Britain's growing shortage of skilled tradesmen, the trade recommendation service RatedPeople.com has today launched its own apprenticeship initiative, RatedApprenticeships.com. This scheme aims to connect young people looking to learn a trade with skilled tradesmen, providing direct 'on the job' training and experience.

Gareth Butcher, owner of GB Plumbing & Heating and member of RatedPeople.com says:

"In the current economic climate, small businesses, like mine, are faced with greater overheads and customers have less money to spend on our services, so taking on a fully-trained employee is not always possible financially."

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"For me, hiring an apprentice has allowed me to take on more work and improve my relationship with my customers, which is a very positive step for my business. Hiring an apprentice does require an investment in time to train these young people, but the rewards of seeing someone learn the skills needed to support and develop your business are huge. I wouldn't hesitate to hire an apprentice again in the future."

Launching in 2009, the National Apprenticeship Service was designed in an attempt to help those who needed an alternative to college and university education, offering on the spot training and a direct route into the world of work. Yet, a third (33%) of 16-25 year olds think it's difficult to get on to an apprenticeship; 39% think it would be hard work. Only 13% consider apprenticeships as a further learning route relevant to them. Surprisingly, despite soaring tuition fees and student debt, many university degrees are still valued higher by 16-25 year olds than a paid apprenticeship leading onto a career in a trade.

Chris Havemann, CEO, RatedPeople.com says:

"The UK economy is built on the backbone of skilled workmen; however, the challenge we face is attracting young people into these professions when so much emphasis is placed on university education and academia. What's more, with nearly a million young people unemployed, clearly not enough is being done to provide the skills needed to get young people from all backgrounds into the workplace."

"The Government's Apprenticeships programme has gone a long way towards highlighting the breadth of options open to young people, but more small trade businesses should be encouraged to enter into this programme to both support young people and their businesses. Apprenticeships provide essential education and training for young people as well as providing small business owners with the extra resources they need to take on more work and provide a better service to the customer. It is for this reason that we are launching RatedApprenticeships.com so that we can help our top tradesmen to find and support the next generation who will help the British economy get back on its feet from a grassroots level."

For more details on the RatedPeople.com apprenticeship initiative and information on signing up, visit www.ratedapprenticeships.com