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Dedicated exclusively to UK secondary education

## Students don't know about Apprenticeship options, study finds

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Almost half of 16 to 25-year-olds have either not heard of Apprenticeships or believe them to be nothing but a source of cheap labour.

Research also found that, despite high levels of youth unemployment, fewer than a quarter, 22 per cent, of the age group believe that an Apprenticeship is their best route into the jobs market.

The YouGov study of 1,000 people, commissioned by RatedPeople.com, the trade recommendation service, and published during National Apprenticeship Week last week, said more needed to be done to raise awareness of the opportunities available through Apprenticeships.

Only 19 per cent of the respondents believed that an Apprenticeship would lead to a well-respected career and only 13 per cent thought they were relevant, compared with 72 per cent who related to the importance of A levels and college courses.

RatedPeople has launched its own initiative – RatedApprenticeships.com – to connect young people who are looking to learn a trade with skilled tradesmen.

Chris Havemann, chief executive of RatedPeople, said: "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.

"With nearly a million young people unemployed, not enough is being done to provide the skills needed to get young people from all backgrounds into the workplace."

The study was published as prime minister David Cameron said he wanted to make Apprenticeships the "new norm for school-leavers" who do not want to go to university.

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He continued: "We need to look at how we can expand Apprenticeship opportunities so that they are available to all young people who are ready and eager to take them up and aspire to get ahead in life."

Mr Cameron suggested the UK should emulate Germany, where the majority of teenagers either go to university or into an Apprenticeship after they finish their exams.

But Christine Blower, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said the prime minister's aspiration for the Apprenticeship route to be treated with the same respect as university courses "needs to filter down to the education secretary".

She explained: "Michael Gove's continuing obsession with the classics and formal education will not convince students, parents, carers or employers that vocational training is of the same value as university or college education."

Elsewhere during National Apprenticeship Week, a study from the National Dyslexia Association welcomed Mr Cameron's commitment to Apprenticeships but said that young people with dyslexia were being "let down" by the system because of functional skills tests that "set them up to fail". A statement added: "The need to ensure open and equal access to these types of tests is crucial to the success of dyslexic apprentices."

For more on Apprenticeships, visit [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)