

CO-OP LEVY SHARE IMPACT REPORT AUTUMN 2025



OWNED BY YOU.
RIGHT BY YOU.

FOREWORD

“

When we created Co-op Levy Share in 2021, it was with a simple ambition – to make sure that unspent apprenticeship levy could be used to change lives, rather than being returned to the Treasury. We knew it could help create opportunities for people who too often face barriers to work and progression.

Four years later, the results speak for themselves. Pledges have exceeded our early target, with more than 3,000 apprenticeships already matched. Two thirds are in communities ranked in the most deprived half of the country, and a third are in the care sector – areas where skills and investment are urgently needed. Co-op Levy Share has also played a role in tackling skills shortages, from rail engineering to early years education, while opening doors for people from underrepresented backgrounds.

This has only been possible through partnership. Our suppliers and many other employers have pledged millions of pounds, supporting apprenticeships across charities, SMEs and large organisations alike. Their commitment has helped create real opportunity – whether that’s a young person starting their first role, a carer developing new skills, or a prisoner preparing to re-enter society with a job and a future.

I am proud of what has been achieved so far, but there is much more to do. By continuing to share unspent levy, we can extend the reach of this initiative, create thousands more apprenticeships, and ensure opportunity flows to the people and places where it can make the biggest difference.

”



Claire Costello

Chief People and Inclusion Officer, Co-op



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WHY CREATE CO-OP LEVY SHARE?

The apprenticeship levy had been in operation for 4 years and although our investment in our own apprenticeships had remained high throughout this period, we started to review the amount of **unspent levy** which we were required to return to HM Treasury each month; **it was significant**. We knew that there would be many other organisations in a similar position to us.

In line with our principles of co-operation and collaboration and wanting to continue to make a difference across our communities, we decided to be more proactive with our ability to transfer levy to other organisations.

In May 2021, the Co-op launched an initiative to support apprenticeships for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds and underrepresented groups within our communities. This was when **we introduced Co-op Levy Share**.

We had no idea how much momentum would be built, how many organisations would want to pledge, or how much, and how many organisations and individuals would need and value the support.

**SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS FROM
LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND
UNDERREPRESENTED BACKGROUNDS**

**WE USE THE LEVY IN A
PROACTIVE WAY**



HOW DOES CO-OP LEVY SHARE WORK?

All levy-paying employers contribute 0.5% of their payroll each month into their apprenticeship levy account. These funds are available to invest in apprenticeship training within their own organisation.

However, any **unspent funds expire after 24 months** and are returned to HM Treasury - amounting to £60 million in 2023/24 alone (Department of Education).



**UNSPENT FUNDS EXPIRE
AFTER 24 MONTHS**

TRANSFER

To help prevent this, employers have been able to **transfer up to 50% of their annual levy funds to other organisations**. These transferred funds can be used to cover the training and assessment costs of apprenticeships agreed with the receiving employer.

Our service matches the pledges with opportunities listed by organisations who need the apprenticeship funding. We **ease the administrative burden** for all participating employers.



WHY DID EMPLOYERS GET INVOLVED?

Donating unspent apprenticeship levy is a powerful way to make a difference. It has enabled levy paying employers to:

- Support their supply chains by helping partners grow their workforce.
- Build strategic relationships with businesses aligned to their goals.
- Enhance their ESG strategy by investing in skills and communities.

Employers have chosen who receives their support and how their funds are used.

Receiving unspent levy is available whether hiring new talent or upskilling existing staff, employers have:

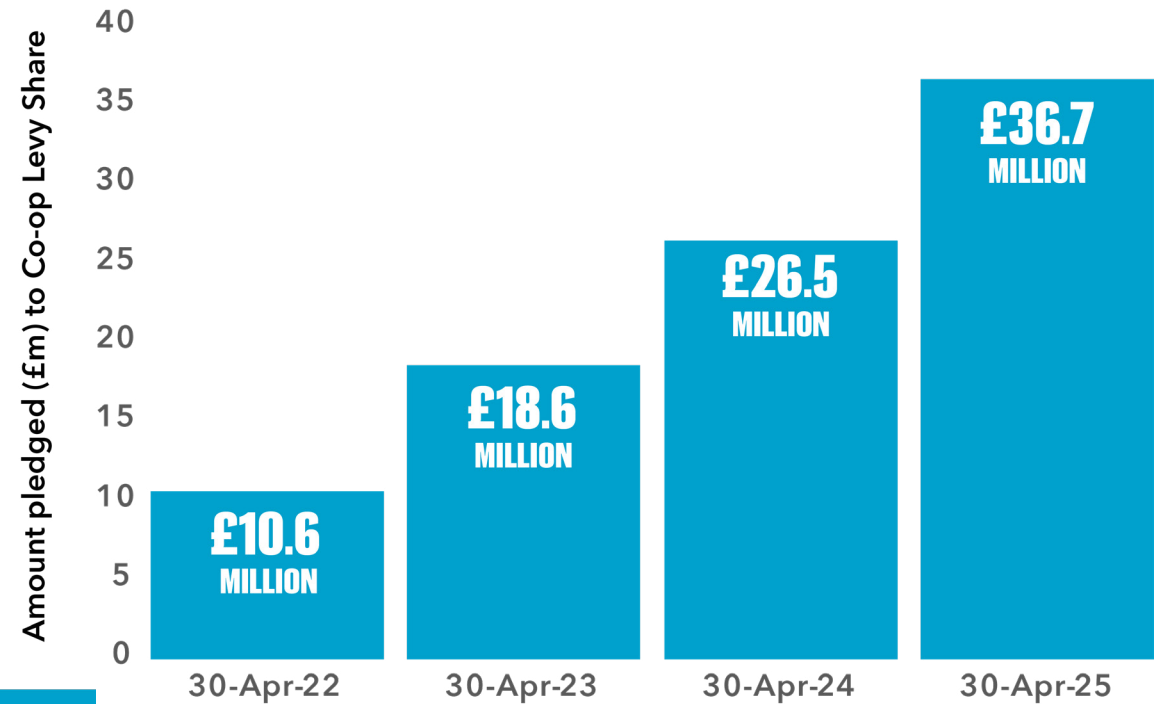
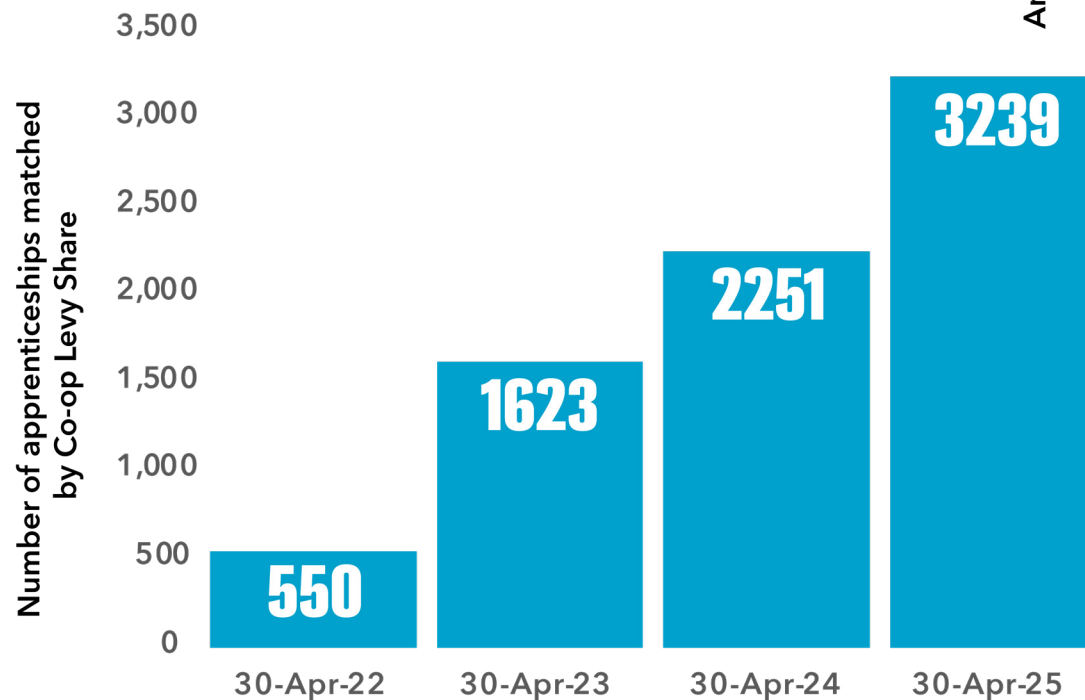
- Published apprenticeship opportunities quickly and easily.
- Received funding for training that supports an organisation's growth.
- Focused on development without the added financial burden.



The report which follows showcases some of the apprenticeships we have supported and how our partnerships have evolved over the last 4 years.

THE GROWTH OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

IN THE LAST **FOUR YEARS**, THE
AMOUNT PLEDGED HAS **MASSIVELY**
EXCEEDED OUR INITIAL TARGET OF **£15**
MILLION OVER THREE YEARS



THE NUMBER OF **APPRENTICESHIPS**
MATCHED HAS **EXCEEDED**
3000

SOME OF OUR PLEDGING ORGANISATIONS



THE WILLIAM HARE GROUP AND WINCANTON

The William Hare Group, established in 1945, is the UK's leading independent steel fabrication company with a turnover exceeding £170 million. It provides innovative, value-engineered steel solutions to major global construction projects across emerging and established markets.

A standout example is the Battersea Power Station redevelopment, featuring over 100 retail and dining outlets, a 2,000-capacity event space, cinema, six floors of offices housing Apple's London campus, and 253 apartments. Complex steelwork was required to accommodate varying column grids, with transfer structures enabling residential levels above. Notably, a 27m-long, 62-tonne girder supports eight floors and over 2,000 tonnes of load, creating open retail space below. It's one of the largest steel pieces manufactured in the UK in recent years.

William Hare apprentices contribute to such projects annually through its award-winning programmes offering advanced, higher, and degree apprenticeships in engineering disciplines and IT.

Despite being a levy payer, the company's own levy is insufficient to fully fund its apprenticeship ambitions.

Image credit - Ross Farnham

**A STANDOUT EXAMPLE
IS THE BATTERSEA
POWER STATION
REDEVELOPMENT**



WHAT THE PEOPLE INVOLVED HAVE SAID

Ema Marinho, Early Careers Lead at William Hare:

“When we had maxed out our available levy we were introduced to Co-op Levy Share. This was a lifeline, as paying for the high level, high value qualifications commercially would have been unaffordable. Over the last few years, Co-op Levy Share has helped us maintain steady recruitment levels which has been essential when addressing our ageing work force issues. Without the service, we would not have been able to recruit our 2023/24 and 2024/25 cohorts of apprentices; a total of 42 apprentices.

The service has not only allowed us to access the vital apprenticeship funding in a very straightforward way, but we have also been able to connect with other businesses in the industry and more organisations, including Wincanton, who have supported us with their levy.”

ZARI:

“I chose to do an apprenticeship as I learn best through hands on experience. I thought that going to university wouldn't give me the same opportunity to work alongside skilled engineers and gain practical knowledge.

I really appreciate the amount of support and training I receive to gain advanced skills in plating and welding. My colleagues are incredibly eager to help creating a positive environment where I feel encouraged to ask questions and grow.”

ZAFEERAH (PICTURED BELOW):

“My apprenticeship journey has been very fulfilling yet challenging, pushing me to work to the best of my ability. I have experienced a variety of opportunities to enhance my skills and knowledge in fabrication and welding preparing for my future.

Earning and learning in my apprenticeship has given me a head start within my career and taken the pressure away of worrying about the transition from school into a full-time job.”

“...OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE MY SKILLS...”



**CLICK HERE TO SEE HOW WINCANTON
SUPPORTED WILLIAM HARE**



THE ROYAL FOUNDATION BUSINESS TASKFORCE

The Co-op is a key member of The Royal Foundation Business Taskforce for Early Childhood, which was convened by The Princess of Wales in March 2023 to galvanise business action on early childhood.

Co-op, along with other members of the Taskforce (Deloitte, Iceland Foods, IKEA UK and Ireland, The LEGO Group, NatWest Group and Unilever UK) has committed to raise £5 million over five years to create over 600 early years apprenticeships through Co-op Levy Share.

Investing in appropriate apprenticeships is a crucial strategy for businesses to contribute to the development of the workforce needed to support substantial expansion plans in the childcare sector. The goal of these 600 apprenticeships is to strengthen the early childhood workforce, focusing on careers dedicated to early childhood development, which spans from pregnancy to age five. This initiative encompasses employers from the private, public, voluntary, and community sectors, all of whom play a vital role in supporting the wellbeing of children aged 0-5 years. The Taskforce has already reached £1.4m of pledges and has funded 116 early childhood apprenticeships.

"Thanks to Co-op Levy Share, we can provide our nursery staff with fully funded training, helping them grow, develop, and deliver the best care for children. This is a life-changing opportunity for many of our team, and it wouldn't be possible without this support."
Bee Whitaker, CEO, Harmony House Dagenham.

SOPHIE YARNLEY LEVEL 5 APPRENTICE - BOVAN CREEK NURSERY

"I wouldn't have been able to participate in my Level 5 Early Years Practitioner Lead Course without the support of Co-op Levy Share. These qualifications are an essential part in the Early Years Sector, helping us to develop our skills and knowledge to be able to progress further in our careers. By Co-op Levy Share giving me this opportunity, I have gained a depth of knowledge and skills that have opened doors that may have not been possible without this qualification."



"...ABLE TO PROGRESS FURTHER..."

NORTH TYNESIDE VODA

18% OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE APPRENTICESHIPS ARE IN THE CHARITY SECTOR

For over 30 years, VODA has been dedicated to supporting and strengthening the voluntary and community sector in North Tyneside. They offer a wide range of services to help organisations thrive and ensure the sector's voice is heard by local and national government and policymakers.

VODA is a registered charity that provides support, advice, training and information to volunteers and voluntary and community organisations operating in North Tyneside. As a charity, they would not be able to meet the costs of the apprenticeships as they do not have sufficient funding for that level of training. They simply could not have gone ahead without Co-op Levy Share.

"The main benefit is that we have been able to secure apprenticeships for our junior managers, ensuring they have the requisite skills to be able to carry out their roles more effectively and open up opportunities for advancement within the organisation. In turn, their staff have benefitted due to the upskilling of the management team. The wider voluntary, community and enterprise sector have benefitted due to the increased skills and knowledge the apprentices have acquired." Deputy CEO Keith Hardy.

THE GOOD NEIGHBOURS PROJECT

The Good Neighbours project supports North Tyneside residents 18+ who can't complete certain tasks due to age, health, disability or other reasons and have no one else to turn to for help. Volunteers work enable residents to remain independent. Collaboration is key, especially in gardening support, shopping trips and various acts of kindness, which wouldn't be possible without dedicated volunteers and community partners.

CASE STUDY

After a cancer diagnosis in 2022, Pam struggled with mobility and was unable to manage her shopping. Her GP referred her to Good Neighbours and were able to assist Pam with her weekly shopping. She praised her volunteer Allison as "a godsend".

PAM - CANCER SURVIVOR



OUR SUPPLIERS - GOODS NOT FOR RESALE

Goods Not For Resale (GNFR) encompasses the essential goods and services that keep our Co-op running - from Marketing, Logistics, and Property to Technology, Utilities, HR, and Professional Services. These suppliers are not just service providers - they are strategic partners in delivering the Co-op's vision of 'Co-operating to build more value for our member-owners every day.'

SUPPLIER COLLABORATION AND SOCIAL VALUE

At the Co-op, supplier management is a critical component of our procurement lifecycle. Through regular engagement and quarterly business reviews, we work closely with our GNFR suppliers to ensure they continue to deliver value well beyond the initial contract. These touchpoints also serve as a platform to explore and embed social value initiatives - one of the most impactful being Co-op Levy Share.

SUPPLIER INVOLVEMENT AND IMPACT

Our GNFR suppliers have played a key role in supporting this initiative. By aligning with the Co-op's values and contributing to Co-op Levy Share, they help to:

- Create meaningful career pathways for individuals who may otherwise be excluded
- Support inclusive growth across industries and communities.
- Demonstrate the Co-op Difference - a commitment to doing business in a way that benefits people and society.

ENGAGING HH GLOBAL FROM OUR SUPPLIER NETWORK

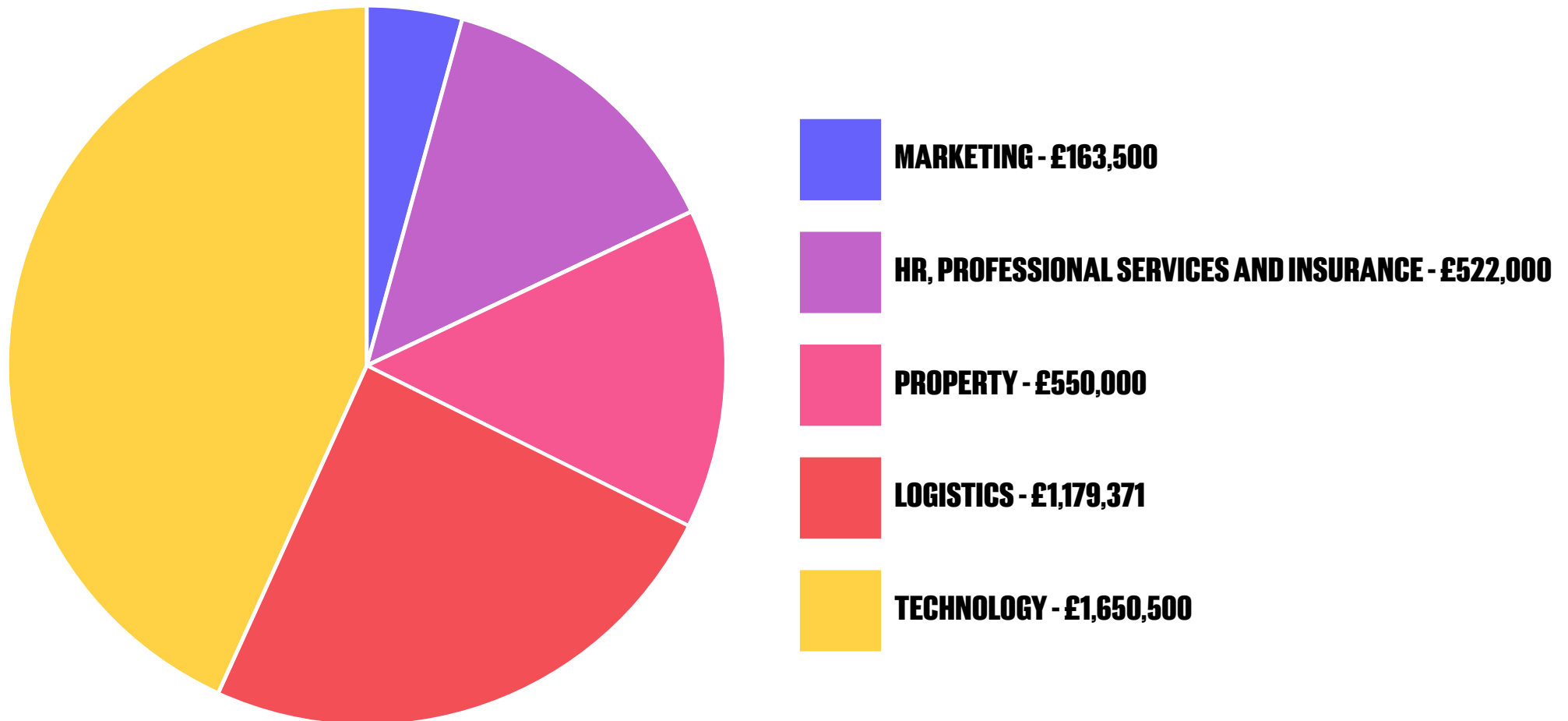


MEANINGFUL CAREER PATHWAYS

GNFR SUPPLIER CO-OP LEVY SHARE PLEDGES

PLEDGES ARE SPLIT INTO 5 CATEGORIES.

FROM 2024 TO JULY 2025, **OVER £4 MILLION** HAS BEEN PLEDGED BY
23 SUPPLIERS SUPPORTING **OVER 360 APPRENTICES.**



MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT GXO

We asked Christopher Mee - an HR Business Partner - to share some insight with us about why GXO has been so committed to Co-op Levy Share since the outset:

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO GET INVOLVED WITH CO-OP LEVY SHARE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

This was an easy decision for us as we have a longstanding partnership with the Co-op and have mutual aligned social values that are centred around learning, community and giving back. It feels amazing that we are able to support different sized opportunities and help support the development of people, not only in our business but in others on the back of this service. GXO are really passionate about Co-op Levy Share and year on year we have committed to increasing the value in which we share, this year being the biggest commitment we have made to the Co-op.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BENEFITS TO YOUR ORGANISATION?

It has allowed us to connect and network with lots of different organisations across England, specifically local smaller businesses which sometimes may struggle to have the funds to develop their amazing colleagues. These connections have naturally grown and have led to many companies asking for additional support down the line which we have been able to commit to.

HOW HAS THE SERVICE MET YOUR NEEDS FROM A CSR/ESG PERSPECTIVE?

Sharing our unspent apprenticeship levy aligns well with our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) commitments, particularly under the Social and Governance pillars:

SOCIAL IMPACT

By transferring unspent levy funds to support training and development for other organisations - especially SMEs or those in underserved communities - we're directly contributing to skills development, employability, and social mobility. This helps create more access to training and contributes to building a stronger, more inclusive workforce across communities.

GOVERNANCE & RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Utilising our levy funds in this way demonstrates proactive and responsible management of our resources. Rather than allowing the funds to expire, we are intentionally redirecting them to maximise societal benefit. This reflects good governance and reinforces our commitment to doing business ethically and sustainably.



**“...A STRONGER, MORE
INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE...”**

CTRG

CTRG are a recruitment company that have also shown commitment to Co-op Levy Share. We spoke to Gordon Mitchell - a Divisional Managing Director - so he could explain it in a little more detail:

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO GET INVOLVED WITH CO-OP LEVY SHARE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Like The Co-op, we are passionate about providing opportunities for development and employment and through the Co-op Levy Share service, our levy can help create routes into employment with organisations who may not have the ability or funds to take on apprentices and offer these opportunities. Having attended a Business Roundtable event hosted by the Co-op and The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood we were inspired to apportion an element of our levy specifically for Early Years Apprenticeships which will support individuals into careers working with young children.



WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BENEFITS TO YOUR ORGANISATION?

We have increased awareness of the value of apprenticeships through sharing the positive social value opportunities we have delivered.

HOW HAS THE SERVICE MET YOUR NEEDS FROM A CSR/ESG PERSPECTIVE?

SOCIAL IMPACT

Through the Early Years Levy Fund we are helping to support a critical stage of human development; pregnancy to 5 years and research shows that investing in early childhood improves children's outcomes and therefore society.

GOVERNANCE & RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Sharing our levy funds is a proactive and responsible way to manage a valuable fund that would otherwise have been lost through expiry.

“...WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT...”

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

Co-op Levy Share touches communities where the need is greatest.

PURPOSE

We reviewed the impact of Co-op Levy Share, by exploring the socio-economic conditions in areas where the apprenticeships have been provided. To do this we used data from the Government's Indices of Deprivation.

APPROACH

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are a unique measure of relative deprivation at a local area level, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Indices of Deprivation 2019 is the most recent release of data.

The Indices provide a set of relative measures of deprivation, based on seven different domains of deprivation.

INCOME

Measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to income.

EMPLOYMENT

Measures the proportion of the working age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.

EDUCATION

Measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.

HEALTH

Measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical and mental health.

CRIME

Measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at a local level.

BARRIERS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES

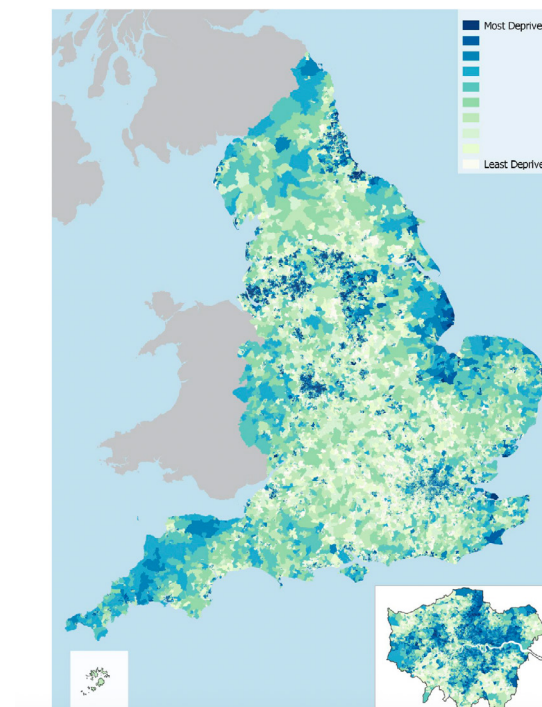
Measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.

LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Measures the quality of both the 'indoor' and 'outdoor' local environment.

Combining information from the seven domains produces an overall relative measure of deprivation, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Using the postcodes of the businesses where Co-op Levy Share apprenticeships were offered, we sourced IMD data for each community, enabling us to understand more about the socio-economic conditions in the areas where apprentices were supported.

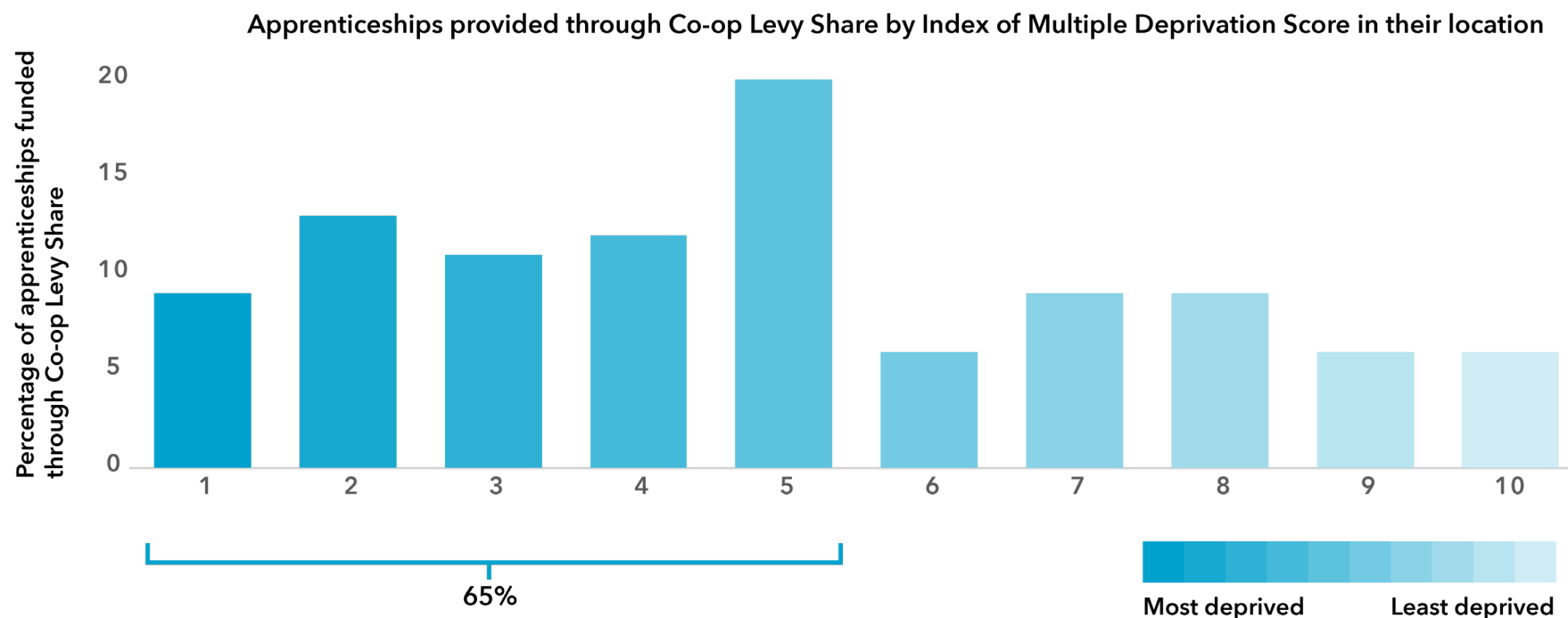


THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

WHAT WE FOUND

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) groups local areas into deciles, assigning each a score of between 1 and 10, with 1 representing the most deprived areas and 10 the least.

Analysis of the locations of the organisations where apprenticeships supported through Co-op Levy Share showed that over two thirds of the apprenticeships offered to date are located in communities scoring in the bottom half of the IMD – and therefore amongst the more deprived communities.



65%

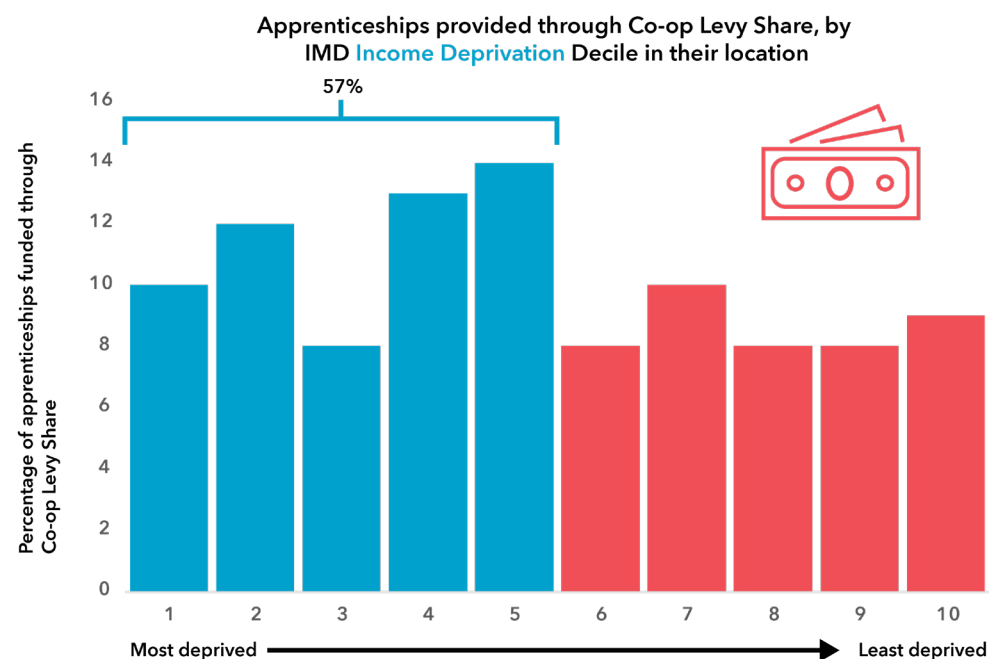
of apprenticeships provided through Co-op Levy Share (Apprenticeships created up to 30 April 2025) were located in communities scoring 5 or below in the Index of Multiple Deprivation

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

WHAT WE FOUND

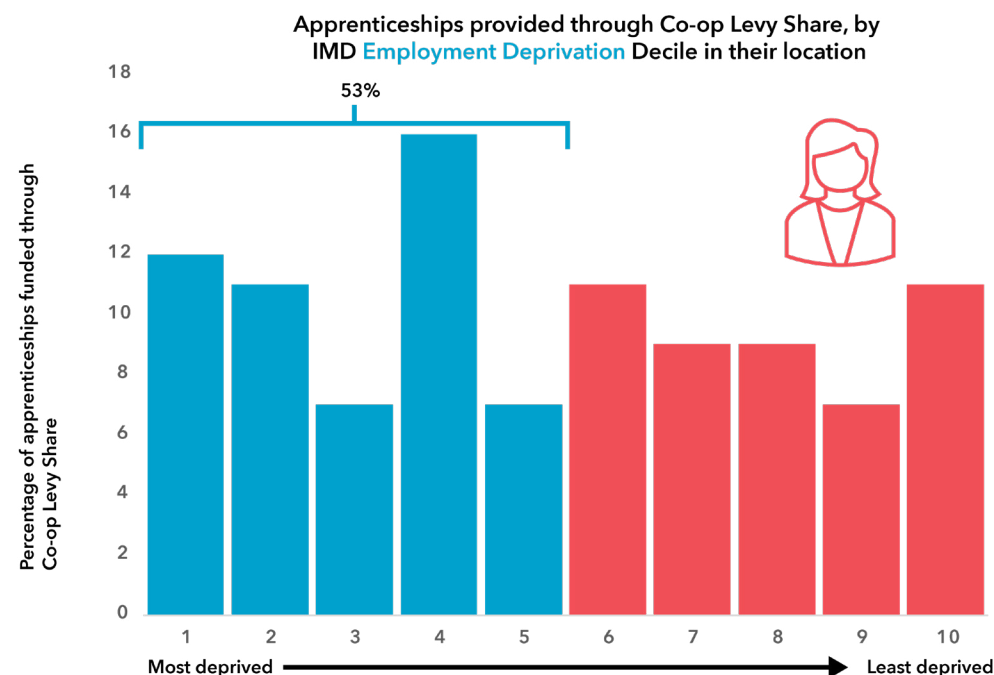
Further analysis of the more detailed Indices that underpin the IMD show that more than half of the apprenticeships provided through Co-op Levy Share are located in communities where Income and/or Employment score in the bottom half of the index.

This provides further reassurance that many of the opportunities being created are in communities that need them most.



57%

of apprenticeships offered through Co-op Levy Share (Apprenticeships created up to April 2025) were located in communities in the 5 lowest Income Deprivation Deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation



53%

of apprenticeships offered through Co-op Levy Share (Apprenticeships created up to April 2025) were located in communities in the 5 lowest Employment Deprivation Deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation

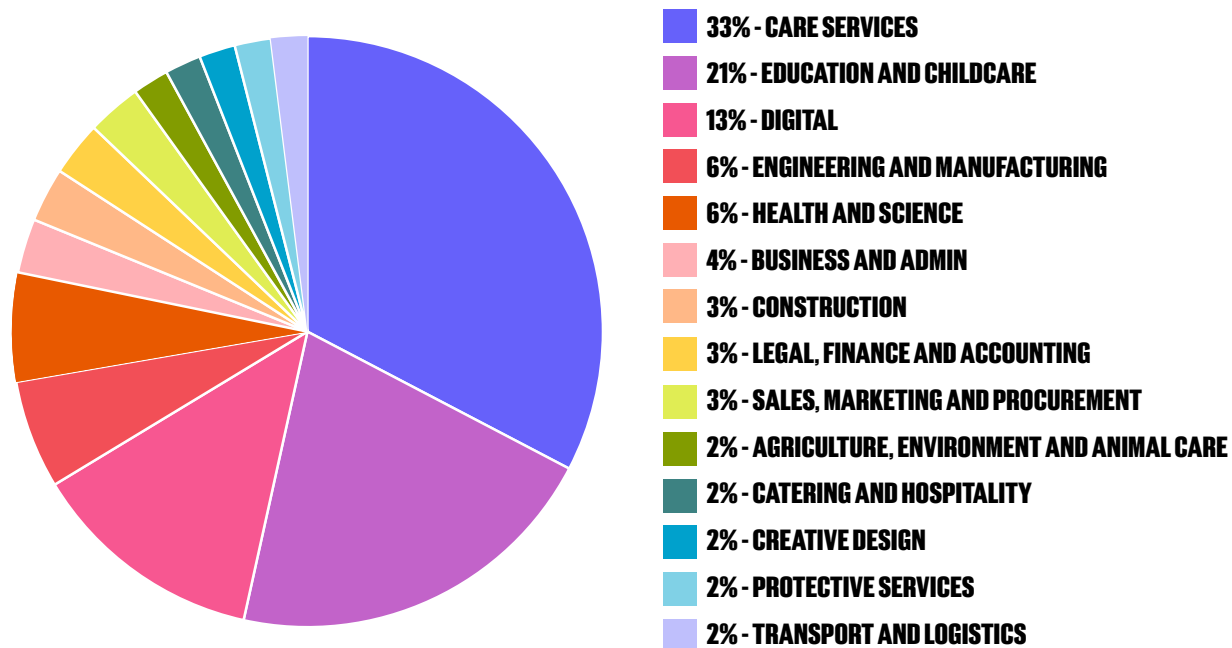
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

WHERE ELSE HAS IT HAD AN IMPACT?

We set out to tackle underrepresentation across apprenticeships, with an initial focus on ethnicity, however we found that there were so many barriers to entry and also to progression that we were very happy to support other areas where there was underrepresentation, including by gender, disability or for those with caring responsibilities.

One of the most striking areas of impact is the sectors we have supported. Perhaps it comes as no surprise that 33% of the apprenticeship opportunities have been in the Care sector. We established Co-op Levy Share shortly after the pandemic lockdown periods of 2020 and 2021, when the health and social care sector had been at the forefront of the public's mind. The sector needed investment with both new jobs and progression opportunities being created. The charts below show some of our findings:

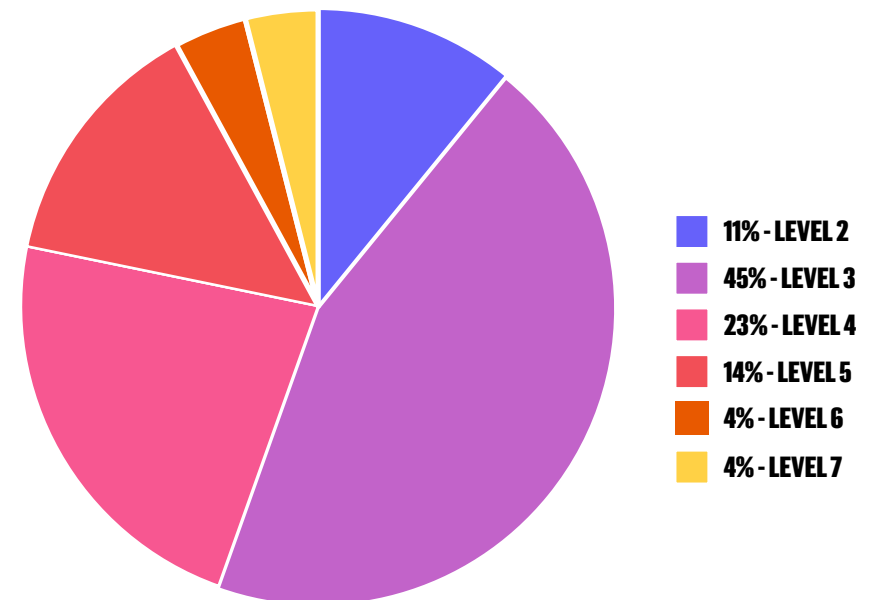
APPRENTICESHIPS BY SECTOR



A THIRD OF APPRENTICES ARE EMPLOYED WITHIN THE CARE SECTOR

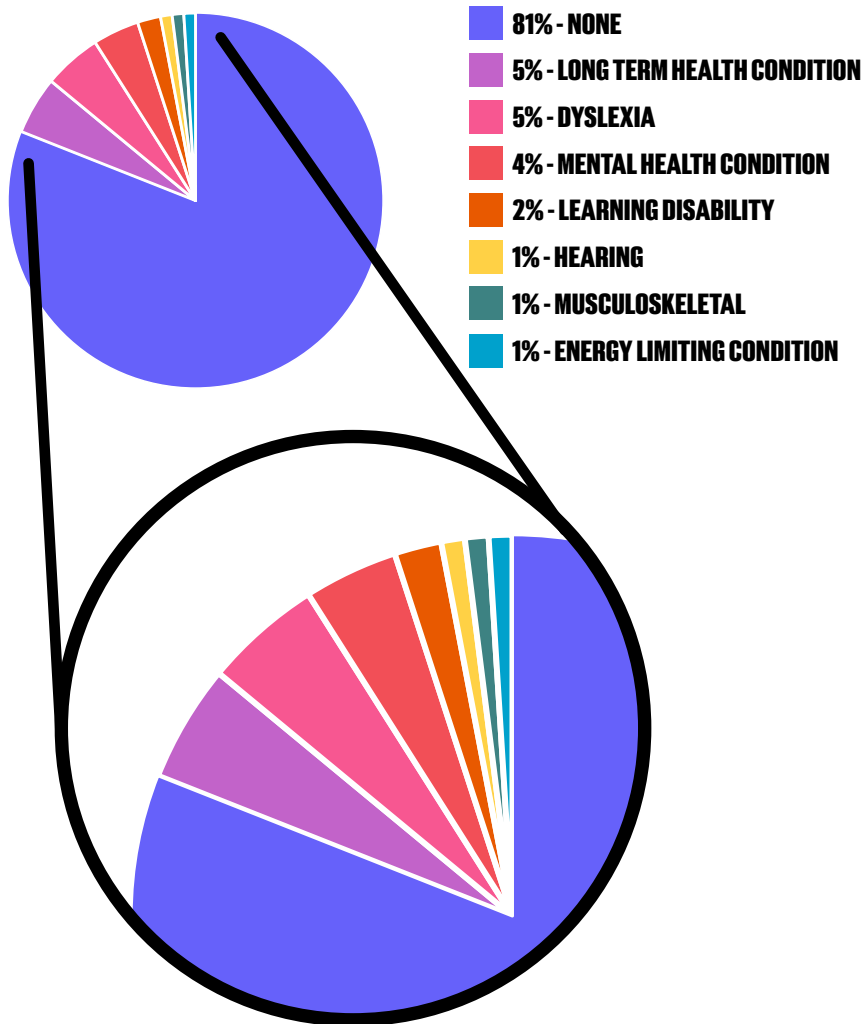
APPRENTICESHIPS BY LEVEL

OVER 50% OF APPRENTICESHIPS ARE AT ENTRY LEVELS 2&3



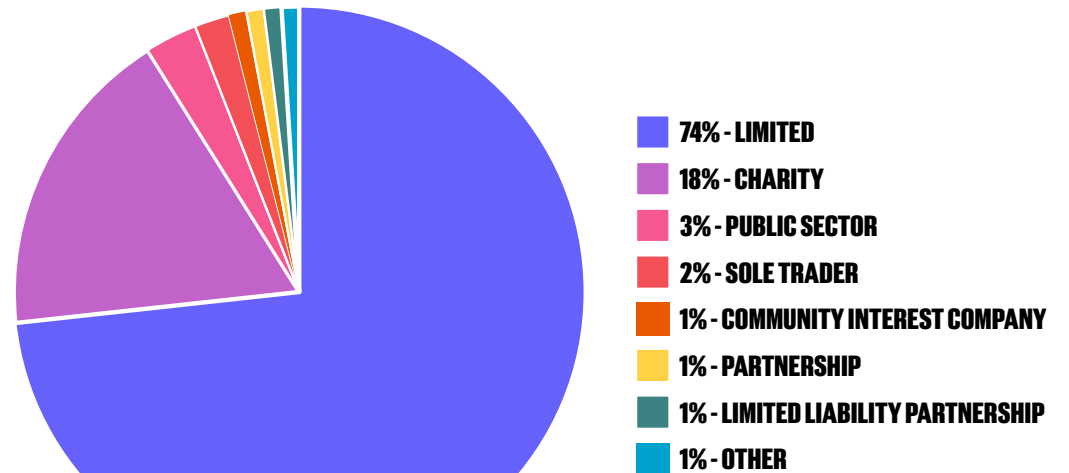
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

APPRENTICESHIPS BY DISABILITY



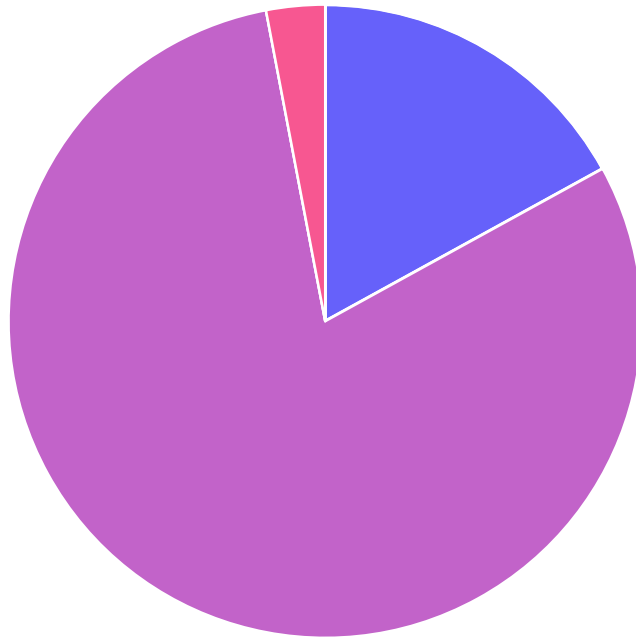
APPRENTICESHIPS BY COMPANY TYPE

CHARITIES MAKE UP 18% OF EMPLOYERS



THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CO-OP LEVY SHARE

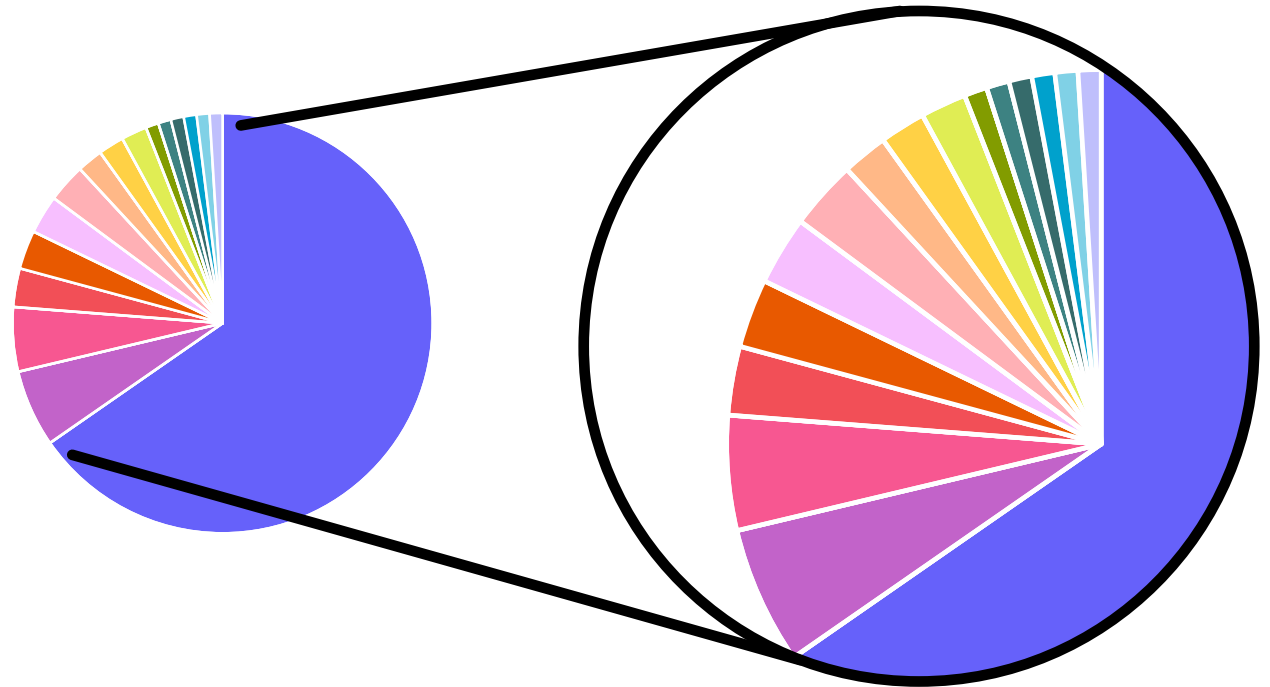
APPRENTICESHIPS BY AGE



- 17% - 46 AND OVER
- 80% - 21-45
- 3% - 16-21

80% OF APPRENTICES ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 21-45

APPRENTICESHIPS BY ETHNICITY



OVER 30% OF APPRENTICESHIPS ARE FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS

- 66% - WHITE BRITISH
- 6% - AFRICAN
- 5% - WHITE OTHER
- 3% - PREFER NOT TO SAY
- 3% - CARIBBEAN
- 3% - INDIAN
- 3% - PAKISTANI
- 2% - ANY OTHER ASIAN BACKGROUND
- 2% - ARAB
- 2% - ANY OTHER MIXED OR MULTIPLE ETHNIC BACKGROUND
- 1% - ANY OTHER ETHNIC GROUP
- 1% - BANGLADESHI
- 1% - WHITE AND BLACK AFRICAN
- 1% - WHITE IRISH
- 1% - WHITE AND BLACK CARIBBEAN
- 1% - WHITE AND ASIAN

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

As we move into year five of Co-op Levy Share, we are faced with potential policy changes which could impact on the ability and/or desire to pledge funds to share with other organisations.

We know that Skills England is looking closely at the landscape to ensure funding is directed to where the needs are greatest. With new shorter duration and Foundation apprenticeships coming down the line, and level 7 apprenticeship funding for the 22+ being removed at the start of 2026, the sector needs to keep a close eye on the changes, responding accordingly.

We continue to work on new initiatives such as our partnership with the **City & Guilds Foundation** which saw the launch of the first prisoner apprenticeship programme at a **Centre of Excellence Skills Hub at HMP Highpoint**, training serving prisoners in **rail engineering** - a sector with critical skills shortages.

This initiative aims to reduce the UK's £21bn annual reoffending cost by offering **industry-standard training and guaranteed employment** upon release. Prisoners from across the UK can transfer to HMP Highpoint to access this opportunity, with job placements aligned to local employer demand.



WHERE THE NEEDS ARE GREATEST

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK



We know that the new growth and skills levy is likely to result in the reallocation of funding to skills and qualifications following the recently published Industrial Strategy and Local Skills Implementation Plans (LSIPs). However, employers have been 'watching this space' for over a year now with no firm decisions yet made.

In the meantime, employers' unspent levy continues to be returned to Treasury, so our message is clear, until we have more information to the contrary, please continue to work with Co-op Levy Share, either as a pledging organisation or as an employer who needs the funding.

If you'd like to be involved by donating your unspent levy, simply register, set your donation amount and choose any matching preferences. You will then be able to review and support opportunities which align with your goals. Or, maybe you are looking to receive funding to support the training and assessment costs of your apprentices.

Engage with Co-op Levy Share by clicking below...

CLICK HERE TO VISIT CO-OP LEVY SHARE

**OUR AMBITION IS TO HAVE
SUPPORTED A TOTAL OF 7000
APPRENTICESHIPS BY 2030**

THANK YOU

We would like to acknowledge the collaboration with our supplier, The Growth Company.

From the outset, Adrian Healey and Natalie McGrath have been key partners in the development and implementation of the Co-op Levy Share, concept, portal and website.

Sandra Kelly was recruited to support us, and her enthusiasm and passion for the mission of Co-op Levy Share has been vital in its growth and success.

We would also like to thank Louise Timperley for her dedication, drive determination and commitment to make Co-op Levy Share what it is today.