



**Damian Hinds**  
*MP for East Hampshire*

News release

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For immediate release

## **Damian Hinds Welcomes More Local Apprenticeships**

Ahead of National Apprenticeship Week, which takes place from the 6-11 February, Damian Hinds has highlighted the importance of apprenticeships and welcomed the Government's support for small local businesses to take on new apprentices for the first time.

Damian Hinds said

*"Apprenticeships are a vital part of making our education system one that helps every young person achieve their potential.*

*"For many young people, making the transition from education to work is a difficult moment and it is right to prepare them the best way we can. Apprenticeships are one way for them to lay a solid foundation for their future and bridge this important moment in their lives - establishing early working habits can help build success that lasts a lifetime."*

The Government are offering additional help to encourage businesses to take on apprenticeships for the first time including offering small companies, with 50 employees or less, up to £1,500 for taking on a first apprentice aged between 16 and 24. This is expected to support up to 20,000 new apprenticeships in 2012/13.

Latest figures show that in the 2010-11 academic year, 102,900 under-19s started an apprenticeship, compared to 93,700 the year before. This represents an increase of 10% in the number of under-19s starting an apprenticeship.

In East Hampshire, there has been an increase of over 50% in the number of people beginning apprenticeships over the last academic year, with 280 people taking up places in 2009-10 rising to 430 for the year 2010-11.

Damian Hinds said

*"It is great news that so many of our local businesses are offering new apprenticeship places, and I hope that more of them will come to see the benefits. I am also greatly encouraged by Alton College's decision to offer a new customer service apprenticeship.*

*"There are many industries, both here in Hampshire and in the wider world, which can offer the potential to forge a real and successful career and a key part of preparing our young people for the world of work is exposing them to all their options.*

*“Our goal must be for every young person to find the right direction for them. Giving them the chance to learn real career skills, skills we need, and get a hands on feel for a job is great way to help them enter adulthood with confidence.*

*“I am looking forward to National Apprenticeship Week and to visiting some of the local businesses already offering apprenticeship places. I would encourage all our local businesses to find out for themselves how much they could benefit from taking part and offering new places.”*

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Now in its fifth year, National Apprenticeship Week runs from 6-11 February and seeks to engage and persuade employers of the advantages of employing and supporting apprentices in their workplace.

To find out more about the Week please contact the National Apprenticeship Service on 0207 904 0791

Or see

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Awards/Apprenticeship-Week-2012/Background.aspx>

For further information please contact:

Ed Condon  
0207 219 7057  
condone@parliament.uk