

Education Select Committee – Adult skills and lifelong learning Submission by Barclays

Introduction

Barclays is a transatlantic consumer and wholesale bank with global reach, offering products and services across personal, corporate and investment banking, credit cards and wealth management, with a strong presence in our two home markets of the UK and the US. With over 325 years of history and expertise in banking, Barclays operates in over 40 countries and employs approximately 83,500 people. Barclays moves, lends, invests and protects money for customers and clients worldwide.

Barclays helps thousands of people every year to develop their employability skills, gain confidence and increase their motivation. We support individuals of all ages, abilities and experiences into employment as well as help employers to fill entry-level roles. It is vital that multi-generational workers have the opportunity to continue developing their skills throughout their careers and have access to employment support that is comparable to those starting out in their careers. Tackling the UK employability skills gap is crucial especially with the ever-changing skills required for the future world of work.

Barclays recognises the importance of adult learning and supports the Committee's focus on this. We have decided not to respond to all of the inquiry questions, instead we have focused on the areas where we feel we have the most to contribute through relevant interventions, insights and research. We hope you find our views useful and we would be happy to discuss them further.

Barclays – Tackling the UK employability skills gap

Before addressing the Committee's specific questions, we thought it might be of interest to provide an overview of the skills and employability programmes that Barclays has introduced for all ages.

LifeSkills created with Barclays

The Barclays LifeSkills programme aims to support 11-24 year olds by equipping them with the core, transferrable skills needed for the workplace, such as CV writing and interview skills, problem solving and creativity. Working with teachers, parents and businesses, we provide free tools, tips and work experience opportunities to help boost a young person's confidence, motivation and employability. Since its launch in 2013, more than 8.8 million young people have participated in the programme. Later this year, LifeSkills will be extended to support the whole UK workforce.

Apprenticeships

Since 2010, we have welcomed over 3,800 apprentices to Barclays. Our apprentices come from all walks of life including school leavers, former carers, returning parents and many more – what we look for in our apprentices is their attitude and eagerness to learn. Back in 2016, we extended our programme to those above the age of 24 by launching our Bolder Apprenticeship scheme. Despite seeing a greater shift in the number of older generational talent joining us at an early career stage, we believe more can be done to raise awareness of such opportunities, especially in the tech and digital space.

Military Veterans Outreach (MVO)

Barclays Military and Veterans Outreach (MVO) helps to address some of the issues faced by Service personnel and veterans as they transition into civilian employment, and aims to highlight the economic value these highly skilled individuals can bring to the corporate world. Through MVO, Barclays offers a number of dedicated initiatives for the Armed Forces community including the Armed Forces Transition, Employment and Resettlement (AFTER) programme and the Veterans' Employment Transition Support (VETS) programme. To date, more than 7,000 Service personnel have been supported by AFTER and over 600 veterans have secured jobs with Barclays. Additionally, through VETS, more than 1,000 employment mentors have supported over 4,000 veterans. Later this year, we will be launching a bespoke military spouses' employment programme.

Connect with Work

Barclays Connect with Work connects individuals seeking employment with recruiting corporates. Aimed at supporting individuals aged 16 and above with the aptitude and attitude to enter the workplace, but who face barriers to doing so, the programme helps to upskill them and puts them in touch with businesses with available entry-level roles. Since the beginning of 2019, Connect with Work has helped 400 people across the UK and has supported lone parents, care leavers, ex-offenders and those who have experienced homelessness.

Digital Skills

Barclays Digital Eagles are passionate about empowering colleagues, customers and local communities to be more confident with technology and to move forward in the digital world. They host 'Tea and Teach' sessions, for all ages, which provide practical and helpful advice on technology and on how to stay safe online. In the last year alone, over 60,000 people have participated in these sessions. Our Code Playground programme also helps teachers, parents and children to get to grips with the basics of coding.

Barclays research – Key findings from Barclays LifeSkills and Barclays MVO

Skills and confidence

- Over half of under 35s think that their job will be obsolete in 20 years' time.¹
- Of the total population, 44 per cent say they plan to continue working after retirement.²
- 32 per cent of working 65 year olds and above are self-employed or freelance.³
- 1 in 3 adults say they do not have the skills needed for the modern world. However, only 7 per cent are planning to change their working situation and receive training on advanced IT skills - only 5 per cent on basic IT skills. ⁴
- 20 per cent of those looking at retraining options around retirement age think they lack modern digital skills.⁵
- 1 in 3 who strongly want to make a change to their work/skills, cite fear of the unknown as the biggest barrier. 1 in 4 who want to change say loss of earnings is a barrier and 1 in 5 say training courses are too expensive.⁶
- 47% of Baby Boomers (51-65 year olds) have the full range of core, transferable skills needed for the workplace. However, their self-confidence is low in terms of skills and talents.⁷

Business interventions

- 79 per cent of UK employers say employability skills are important in their industry. However, 34 per cent do not plan to offer any training in these skills in the next year.⁸

Tailored support – Military spouses

- Two-thirds (nearly 66 per cent) of military spouses feel that having a partner in the armed forces has negatively impacted their career in some way, with many having to sacrifice their own careers to accommodate their partner's. A third (33 per cent) report they have had to leave a job or take reduced hours because of it, while 15 per cent have had to take a job below their level of experience. 37 per cent say they'd like more support with finding work placements, while 28 per cent say practical advice on writing CVs and attending interviews would help them to achieve their full career potential.⁹

¹ Barclays LifeSkills and Acacia Avenue Research, 2018

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ 'How Employable is the UK? Meeting the Future Skills Challenge', Barclays and NatCen, page 8

https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/news/2018/Barclays%20Lifeskills%20report_v10.pdf

⁹ Barclays AFTER and Opinium, January 2019

Inquiry questions

Question 1: What are the benefits of adult skills and lifelong learning (ASALL) for productivity and upskilling the workforce?

1. *The economy and the future world of work*

It is well known that having a suitably skilled workforce is vital to the UK's economic wellbeing. However, with expected changes to the nature of the future world of work, we need to start taking action to ensure that we have a fully prepared workforce. The impact of digitalisation, automation and machine learning is expected to lead to a demand in new skills and we need to ensure all workers are sufficiently trained so that they can adapt and contribute to the changing labour market.

It is increasingly likely that digital skills will be required for many more careers in years to come.¹⁰ We believe that all workforce participants will need to be equipped with the ability to, not only consume digital, but also create digital – such as coding, programming and content editing – and that ASALL provisions have a crucial role in upskilling the workforce in this area.

Attention also needs to be paid to improving the core, transferrable skills of adults. No matter what the future world of work will look like, it appears that soft skills, such as productivity, adaptability and leadership; will be as relevant then as they are today. However, in research published last year by Barclays LifeSkills and NatCen, we found that nearly 60 per cent of UK adults lack the full set of the core employability skills, despite the fact employers are increasingly seeking candidates with these highly valued skills.¹¹

2. *Workforce diversity*

With many of us now working until a much older age, it is likely that we will need to be motivated and trained throughout our careers. To achieve this, we believe there has to be a combination of the individual taking responsibility for their own upskilling and a commitment from employers to provide continuous training opportunities. However, Barclays LifeSkills research found 34 per cent of businesses do not plan to offer skills training in the next year – despite the majority of UK employers rating these skills as important to their industry.¹²

Nonetheless, businesses are likely to benefit from recruiting, reskilling and retraining older workers. Having experienced, multi-generational workers helps to create a diverse workforce, bringing a range of ideas and opinions to the table. We believe that these workers have experience, both life and work, that can better reflect the make-up of a business' customer,

¹⁰ 'How Employable is the UK? Meeting the Future Skills Challenge', Barclays and NatCen, page 6

https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/news/2018/Barclays%20Lifeskills%20report_v10.pdf

¹¹ 'How Employable is the UK? Meeting the Future Skills Challenge', Barclays and NatCen, pages 2-3

https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/news/2018/Barclays%20Lifeskills%20report_v10.pdf

¹² 'How Employable is the UK? Meeting the Future Skills Challenge', Barclays and NatCen, page 8

https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/news/2018/Barclays%20Lifeskills%20report_v10.pdf

client or stakeholder base. At Barclays, we recognised this and have had 600 veterans join us on a permanent basis and introduced our Bolder Apprenticeship scheme, a bespoke channel for the over 24s.

3. Confidence and motivation

From our skills initiatives, we have found that some individuals who have been out of work for a period of time, or are looking to transition into a new sector, can struggle with anxiety about their employment prospects and require guidance on how to apply their work experience to new career paths. For example, retirees, ex-Service personnel and veterans have a wealth of skills and talents, but may need support in communicating these in job applications and interviews. Our LifeSkills, Connect with Work and MVO/AFTER programmes all provide valuable CV and interview workshops.

There also needs to be recognition of the workers who support individuals back into employment, such as employment advisors, charity staff and housing association officers, and if they have access to sufficient resources to help them in their work. Earlier this month, Barclays LifeSkills launched content for those in support worker roles to help adult learners reach their potential.

Question 2: What are the benefits of ASALL for social justice, health and well-being?

1. Transferring skills and talents to suit individual health needs

Health challenges or the inability to continue in physically demanding work such as construction or manual labour, often leads to individuals feeling like they have to leave their profession or quit work altogether. This is not always the case and sometimes individuals simply require guidance on how they can apply or transfer their skills to different roles and how they can undertake retraining opportunities. Through our AFTER programme, we deliver bespoke CV and interview skills workshops to provide wounded, injured, sick and vulnerable (WISV) veterans with the tools to translate their unique experience so they resonate with civilian employers. Additionally, working with military charity partners, our AFTER Grants programme has provided £3 million in the form of employability grants to further assist WISV veterans secure long-term, meaningful civilian employment.

2. Social justice and equality

We know that providing retraining opportunities and steady employment for individuals leaving the criminal justice system is a key part to reintegrating individuals back into society and reducing reoffending rates. Our Connect with Work programme works with charity partners to prepare individuals, pre-release, for work with specific employers – we have found that by providing touch points and specific role training whilst on temporary leave makes the

transition into work smoother, for the employer and the individual.

3. Alternative pathways to full-time retirement

Through our Connect with Work programme, we work with individuals who have found that retirement was not the right decision for them. The reasons for this have been predominantly financial, but for some individuals retirement triggered feelings of isolation and social exclusion. In these cases, we support them into part time work that fits their needs and abilities.

We believe that having suitable ASALL provisions, which open up alternative pathways for those nearing retirement, will provide the motivation in some individuals that retraining is a possible option for them. For example, our Bolder Apprenticeship scheme (for those over the age of 24) is a viable alternative for those who are seeking second careers.

4. Reducing digital exclusion

Many more of us are now digitally exposed and engaging with technology everyday – we now use technology for our health care, shopping orders, financial needs and social communications. A large proportion of the UK population now benefit from these opportunities but there is also the possibility that people can utilise the benefits without being fully prepared to manage the risks.

There is also a danger that some people could be digitally left behind. From our Tea and Teach sessions, held by the Barclays Digital Eagles, we have found that some of those who are nearing retirement or have retired potentially struggle to fully participate in online activities/processes as well as stay socially communicative as they can lack the confidence to operate online. We believe that even a basic level of digital understanding can make a significant difference to an individual's online safety and feelings of isolation.

Question 3: What role can local authorities/combined authority areas play in ASALL provision?

1. Working in tandem with businesses

We believe that local/combined authorities, local/national Governments, businesses and educators should work in tandem to address the employability skills gap and to progress ASALL provisions. A number of businesses are developing their own employer-led interventions, which local authorities could be encouraged to tap into. Employer networks are another source that local authorities could work alongside, in order to create tailored commitments that can respond to local employment needs. Similarly, there are charities, community groups and events that authorities could springboard from, such as Pension Groups or Older Person Fairs.

2. Convening power – local employers and businesses

Local and combined authorities also have the convening power to encourage businesses and employers who are not already providing ASALL provisions to get onboard. Authorities might be able to identify potential businesses or work cohorts that could have the most to gain from ASALL provisions and could point them in the right direction of how they can reach out to others for support and guidance.

3. Promotion of multi-generational apprenticeships

We believe that local and combined authorities could have a powerful role to play when it comes to promoting apprenticeships to the older worker as they continue to be associated with younger people (those 24 or under). They could make resources and advice pages available on their websites, inspire potential applicants by promoting local case studies and encourage businesses to share toolkits and insights from running their own multi-generational apprenticeships to support those who are thinking of starting their own.

Question 4: To what extent is the range, balance and quality of formal and informal ASALL education adequate?

1. Digital skills

As previously mentioned, basic digital skills are likely to be required for many more careers in the future so everyone, of all ages, need to be suitably trained. Although there are many digital courses aimed at adults, we believe more courses need to provide a basic introduction to digital skills, before moving onto the technical training. Failing to do so, could deter potential learners from even considering taking on digital courses.

Although there are free resources available, some introduce a cost/fee over time (e.g. after an introductory period) or when the learner wishes to progress by gaining a qualification. The cost implementation could be a potential barrier, especially for those learning flexibly.

2. Training of educators and trainers

It is equally important that educators or trainers who are delivering digital and technology training for all ages are coached to the relevant standard. We are aware that there is a lot currently happening in this space, and we fully support these efforts.

3. Businesses and education providers working together

We encourage businesses to reach out to educators, Further Education colleges, local councils/authorities to highlight the core skills needed in the local labour market, in order to better prepare students and adults when applying for roles. Research conducted by Barclays

LifeSkills and NatCen discovered that while employers stress the importance of leadership skills, educators ranked this as one of the lowest skills required.¹³

4. Barclays 'Able to Enable'

Barclays Able to Enable is a bespoke channel designed to support people whose careers may have been held back by the stigma surrounding their health conditions. The programme offers a three-month paid internship, giving people the opportunity to learn new business skills, gain experience and build their confidence in the workplace. On completion, individuals have the chance to be considered for our apprenticeship scheme or a permanent role with us.

Question 5: Who currently participates in and benefits from lifelong learning?

Barclays has not responded to this question.

Question 6: What lessons can the UK learn from abroad?

Barclays Connect with Work is a global programme. Below is a summary of our key learnings from our work in the US:

1. Alternatives to academia

As noted in the '[The Promise of Apprenticeships in New York](#)' policy brief published by Barclays and the Center for an Urban Future, we believe that some of the fastest-growing jobs, in technology for example, do not require a typical four-year degree, and in fact keeping up with the pace of change is a challenge for the education system. Companies can help to bridge the skills gap by providing relevant vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities.

2. Cross-sector collaborations

We believe that cross-sector collaborations are key to addressing the employability skills gap and progressing ASALL provisions. For example, back in 2017, we sought to support veteran-owned start-ups by partnering with the New York University's Tandon School of Engineering, to develop a one-year incubator programme for early-stage start-ups, as well as a 12-week skills programme, known as Veterans Entrepreneurship Training, for veterans looking to transition into entrepreneurship. You can find out more [here](#) and [here](#).

3. Demand-led training interventions

¹³ 'How Employable is the UK? Meeting the Future Skills Challenge', Barclays and NatCen, page 8
https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/news/2018/Barclays%20Lifeskills%20report_v10.pdf

Barclays has a longstanding partnership with Per Scholas, a nationwide non-profit that helps people in overlooked communities to access careers in technology. Together we have developed a 17-week cybersecurity training course, which responds to the current demand in tech and digital skills. We achieved this by hosting working group sessions with corporate peers in financial services to strategise on what a curriculum should include. In 2018, we published a [report](#) outlining three proven solutions for effective and scalable IT workforce development initiatives for consideration, across industries and organisations structures.

Conclusion

- It is vital that multi-generational workers have the opportunity to continue developing their skills throughout their careers and have access to employment support that is comparable to those starting out in their careers.
- The world of work is changing and we need to start taking action to ensure that we have a fully prepared workforce – there is an expectation that digitalisation and automation might lead to a demand in new skills.
- Sufficient ASALL provisions can bring multiple benefits in terms of economic development, workforce diversity, social justice, digital inclusion as well as increases in motivation and confidence levels.
- Local and combined authorities, local and national Governments, businesses and educators should work in tandem to address the employability skills gap and convene around the core skills needed in the local labour market.
- Barclays is proud to help thousands of people every year to develop their employability skills, gain confidence and increase their motivation. We support individuals of all ages, abilities and experiences into employment as well as help employers to fill entry-level roles.