

## PROJECT TEXAPP

### A Strategic Initiative to Strengthen the Supply of Apprenticeships in European Textile and Clothing Sector

#### What is TEXAPP about?

The TEXAPP project has addressed the issue of apprenticeship delivery in the textile and clothing sector dominated by small, medium and micro enterprises (SMEs). TEXAPP aimed to foster and strengthen the supply and quality of the apprenticeships in the Textile and Clothing sector (T&C), as well as providing processes and structure to help motivate SMEs and micro enterprises to take an active part in it.

This close cooperation between several Textile and Clothing European Associations under the coordination of EURATEX (The European Textile and Apparel Confederation), has delivered a structure that is supported by tools and training focused on the T&C sector. These tools, training course and templates consider the specific needs and obstacles faced by SMEs on this field. The sectoral tool kit aims to assist SMEs in setting up, delivering and ensuring the quality of their apprenticeships, including apprentice assessments. The TEXAPP project has also produced targeted tools for pooling resources, sharing information, exchanging knowledge, developing ideas and learning from each other's experiences.

#### SMEs Capacity Building

A clear understanding of the regulatory framework and the current situation in the apprenticeship schemes existing within the sector or at cross-sectorial level in each partners' countries was carried out. This information was used for the development of a common *standard* or *guideline* that describes the capacities and competences required for a SME to manage and deliver an apprenticeship programme successfully. The result is a company assessment tool that is now available for SMEs to help them identifying areas where company development is required.

#### Competence Centre for Apprenticeships (TEXAPP Hub)

The establishment of the TEXAPP Hub is a model of an inter-sector focused partnership and cooperation on apprenticeship. The output is an agreed business model, available on the TEXAPP Hub, and which will help identifying the minimum set of EU standards for the delivering of apprenticeship for the sector. This will contemplate the definition of the minimum outcomes for the training processes, the clarification of the roles of the different actors and the improvements of the training skills of in-company mentors and supervisors.

#### Mobilize SMEs and Companies for Apprenticeships

The activities to include more SMEs in apprenticeships have been the groundwork. In order to reach the greatest number of selected SMEs committing the implementation of apprenticeships, the project has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with chambers/companies participating in dual VET and/or in the TEXAPP Hub to support the action.

#### Experience Exchange for Apprenticeships

An essential basis for the successful implementation of the policy changes has been the contribution of the relevant stakeholders in steering, planning, implementing and evaluating the apprenticeships. This dialogue and interactions will continue also after the termination of the project.

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#### National Results and Findings:

##### National Results:

Following a period of piloting and discussion with the Community of Practice, the Centre continued to develop the Standard, training material and supporting guidance and self-assessment tools and templates to ensure SME's who are currently involved with or planning to develop their own apprenticeship training had all the support needed.

In summary;

- UK Standard is developed and in use.
- Training programme developed and in use.
- Supporting documentation for the training programme and to support the apprentice supervisor developed and in use.
- Training programme running and more planned for 2018.
- Twenty-three companies have attended the UK Standard training programme.
- Nine companies have completed all the commitments required to meet the UK Standard and another five companies are nearing the stage where they can be registered.
- Fifty-one company employees who work and supervise apprentices have attended the training programme so far.
- Nine training courses have run so far at 4 different locations and more are planned.
- All the training material, Standard, and other key documentation can be found by following this link to the TEXAPP HUB <https://we.tl/VxEnxm0F2u>

##### UK findings:

Following the piloting phase, the Centre fully revised the UK Standard and the whole of the training programme to better meet the needs of employers and the supervisory staff who will work with apprentices.

The employers network (Community of Practice) have demonstrated that the TEXAPP Standard has supported their work to introduce successful and effective apprenticeship training programmes into their company. Employers who have existing apprenticeship programmes in place have demonstrated a new approach where the Standard has helped to structure their apprenticeship training - clarify roles within the company and build a strong senior management commitment to meeting and sustaining the 6 key principles underpinning the UK Standard.

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In summary;

#### Main findings and action points:

- Employers all meet the required legal responsibilities to employ and run an apprenticeship programme.
- They all respond more quickly to meet any unfulfilled apprenticeship vacancy.
- They have introduced and show a commitment to a company succession plan for their apprentice – to either study at higher levels or to progress within the company.
- Time off from the workplace is now a feature of all the apprenticeship programmes and employers are aware and comply with this need.
- They have a new and strong understanding about how to attract the right learner onto the right programme and how to provide the right support to ensure the apprenticeship is a success.
- They have a clear understanding of the need to have a good supply of suitable young people who are interested in the textile manufacturing sector.
- They have structured company training plans in place for each apprentice and these are inspected against our UK Standard
- They all have structured induction programmes in place that ensure a smooth transition for young people into an apprenticeship programme.
- They all have nominated supervisors in place who have all completed the training programme to support the apprentice
- Company commitment to training and their role in skills development has improved dramatically.
- Companies are aware of the need to plan for training for all staff and develop clear succession plans to meet skill needs within an ageing workforce.
- They all appreciate the Standard and most use the Standard for the 1<sup>st</sup> time to structure and plan their apprenticeship programmes.

#### Testimonials:

##### **Wooltex UK Ltd;**

*“There was a time during the 1980s and 90s when the UK textile industry seemed to be in terminal decline and as a result textile training options for young people were reduced or eliminated. The resulting skills gap which we see today is a direct consequence of those times but fortunately the industry is now working hard to recover the situation. My company, Wooltex UK, is prioritising apprentice training in all areas to provide the skills and leadership which we need for the future and to ensure our continuing success. The Standard and the supporting training programme is a key feature of our commitment to these principles.”*

##### **Camira Fabrics Ltd;**

*“Camira is living proof that textiles are alive and kicking and providing great career paths for apprentices to learn a trade and progress into an exciting career. We have a regular intake of apprentices each year, with positions which have been filled across all parts of our business in our factories, technical roles, or office based. We’ve seen people come up through the ranks in spinning, weaving, technical testing, quality, design, supply chain, marketing and finance. Our modern apprentices have gone on to win prestigious awards and travel the world and excel in their chosen career. Our work in this area has improved following the company training course and adopting the UK Standard.”*



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*Abraham Moon and Sons Limited;*

*"Founded in 1837 and with our roots in apparel, we are one of the last remaining vertical woollen mills in Great Britain, with a reputation for consistent quality and innovative design. We sell globally from 3 brands - apparel, furnishings and accessories. Due to the move from traditional apparel only, the Company has grown significantly in the last 15 years and employs over 230 people. Roles are varied with over 100 different jobs within the business. Learning and transferring into different roles within the business is encouraged, as we like to promote from within. We were the 1st company to be recognised as meeting the Standard and our cut glass recognition sits proudly on our reception desk"*



#### How the TEXAPP approved employer standard can be applied in the UK?

While the standard has been developed for use with companies in the textile sector, the UK version is a generic standard which is equally relevant to both public and private sector apprenticeship providers. The apprenticeship programme in the UK is administered and funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). During the TEXAPP project, The Centre liaised with the ESFA to inform them of the proposed activity and to subsequently provide details of the UK standard and standardisation process to ensure that the ESFA was fully aware of the potential for the development.

The Centre is part of strong networks nationally and locally which include apprenticeship providers from all sectors, funding agencies and sector specialist organisations. Ongoing dissemination activity will ensure that members of those networks are aware of the value and operational details of the standard, and The Centre will be promoting opportunities locally, nationally and throughout the sector for agencies and training providers to explore opportunities to engage with the standard. The Centre believes that the development and introduction of the standard will be considered as an important and valuable initiative throughout the UK, where there is a continuing emphasis, both politically and operationally, for the improvement in standards and results from apprenticeship activity.

The focus on the delivery of apprenticeship programmes within England has become even more visible throughout 2018 following the introduction of the Government's Apprenticeship Levy for companies with a payroll of over £3million per annum. Discussions with the ESFA are planned in the Autumn of 2018 to consider national endorsement of the Approved Employer Apprenticeship Standard developed through the TexApp project.



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