

PRESS RELEASE

SUPERDRUG LAUNCHES NEW APPRENTICESHIP CAMPAIGN TO PUSH FOR PROGRESS IN APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT ACROSS THE UK



- **'Rise Up to Level Up' pledges to employ 500 apprentices this academic year, double the roles available over the next three years and push for progress in five areas of low intake.**
- **Tommy Mallet backs the campaign to raise awareness around the support needed for young people to gain valuable life skills.**
- **The campaign, supported by the British Retail Consortium, calls for reform and greater flexibility in the Apprenticeship Levy to ensure valuable funds are no longer wasted.**
- **859,000 young people are out of work or education, A-level and GCSE grades are predicted to fall and concerns rise around impact on disadvantaged groups.**

Accessible health & beauty retailer, Superdrug, has today announced the launch of 'Rise Up to Level Up,' a campaign that strives for progress in apprenticeship employment across the UK. The campaign, fronted by TV star, one time apprentice and now business owner, Tommy Mallet, and backed by The British Retail Consortium, will see Superdrug employ 500 apprentices this year, double intake over the next three years and focus on five key areas where unemployment amongst the young is high, but apprenticeship take-up is low.

With an estimated 859,000 young people currently out of work or education,¹ GCSE results expected to be lower on average thanks to a return to pre-covid grading², and growing concern that disadvantaged groups are being hit the hardest, apprenticeships are vital to the economic future of the UK and are an important option for young people as they enter the world of work.

Speaking on his involvement with the campaign, **TV star and successful business owner Tommy Mallet** says: *"I am so proud that Superdrug asked me to be part of this campaign as this is an area that is close to my heart. With my ADHD and dyslexia, I didn't have an easy ride at school and left at 16 with no qualifications, before going on to try three different apprenticeships - so I really do have first-hand experience of how a supportive apprenticeship can lead you to the right path. It's worrying to think that on receiving their GCSE results, many young people might be confused and unsure about*

what to do with their future, and left feeling like they may never be able to achieve their career aspirations. An apprenticeship can give you such a solid start and a clear route for progression in a career. We need to make sure we're putting these options in front of young people, bringing in as many apprentices as possible and providing the ongoing support for success within programmes."

The 'Rise Up to Level Up' campaign also reinforces the BRC's calls for change to the controversial UK Apprenticeship Levy, to make sure that valuable funds are no longer wasted, great applicants don't have to be rejected due to strict rules, more young people and applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds can be brought into schemes and all apprentices are better supported to reduce drop-out rates.

Helen Dickinson OBE, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium, said: *"With retail transformation underway and industry jobs becoming more productive, higher-skilled and better paid, retailers have a wealth of exciting apprenticeships on offer. We are proud to support this ambitious scheme, which will showcase the wide range of career options within retail and grow the number of apprenticeship places, giving hundreds more young people and applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds a rewarding start to their careers.*

"Rise-up to Level Up shows how much value retailers place on apprenticeships and the proactive steps they're taking to provide more opportunities for people from diverse walks of life. But the industry could go even further if the apprenticeship levy was more flexible, with the option to spend funds on a wider range of training which meets the industry's skills needs. Now is the time for government to work with businesses to build an effective apprenticeship system which ensures a steady pipeline of talent and better supports apprentices, today and in the future."

To increase awareness this August, Superdrug, alongside its A.S. Watson sister company, Savers, is relaunching its Apprenticeship Scheme, to promote social mobility and attract a greater pool of young, disadvantaged and diverse talent. Recruitment focuses will take place in five key areas – London, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and South Coast – which have all been found to have high unemployment rates amongst the young, but low uptake in past years of the apprenticeship scheme considering the size of the store estate in these areas.

Amy Davies, People Director at Superdrug and Savers, says; *"Our apprenticeship programmes are specifically designed to help, support and train every apprentice whilst they earn, to rapidly get where they want to in their careers and to cultivate and nurture the next generation of leaders in retail. However, the current restrictions mean there are limitations on what training we can offer and who we can accept. Within the last year we have had to turn away 7,200 great applicants who have not met the strict criteria and our drop-out rates have increased to 30%, as we can't be flexible enough with our programmes or afford the right support when apprentices are in scheme. Apprenticeships are such a great choice for young people as they leave school and statistics show they are needed now more than ever - so as a business that stands for equality and accessibility, we remain committed to doing what we can to increase our intake and improve our scheme."*

Superdrug and Savers offer one of the largest and most long-standing Apprenticeship Schemes in UK retail (17 years) - the multi-tier scheme aims to help people to kick-start, accelerate and elevate their careers. Whether a school leaver looking for their first job, a current employee hungry to take on more responsibility, or an ambitious assistant manager, the programme is designed to support every apprentice. The programme has three levels of apprenticeships that people can apply for and aims to support them at every stage of their career and progression. Rise up to Learn is for entry level retail



apprenticeships, Rise up to Level-Up – a step into management and Rise Up to Lead on – a step in to a leadership role.

Since its launch in 2007, over 4,500 people have achieved qualification and 30% of graduates have chosen to stay within the business.

For more information and to apply for an apprenticeship position visit

<https://www.superdrug.jobs/apprenticeships> and <https://www.savers.jobs/apprenticeships>

-ENDS-

For further information, interview or request for comment, please contact the Superdrug press office at Mind+Matter on 01273 712000 or email superdrug-mindplusmatter@evokegroup.com

Notes to editor:

About Superdrug

- Superdrug offers the best in trending beauty brands, everyday personal care, and essential health products. With over 790 stores across the UK and Ireland, Superdrug brings the best in accessible beauty and health to the high street and online.

¹ <https://www.cityandguilds.com/news/december-2022/youth-misspent-uncovering-harsh-realities-for-britains-young-people-in-todays-job-market>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/sep/29/a-levels-gcse-grades-england-2023-covid-pandemic-learning-loss-disadvantaged-students>