

Employer Guide to Apprenticeships



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About us

The National Apprenticeship Service supports the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships in England. It offers free, impartial advice and support to employers looking to recruit for the first time or expand their programme.

We enable our nation to generate a more highly skilled workforce through apprenticeships, traineeships and awards, which create opportunity, support development and showcase excellence. Our endeavours enable us to:

- Transform the lives of our people.
- Stimulate growth and strengthen our economy.
- Instil pride in the skilled people of our nation.

We work with businesses of all sizes to analyse training needs, identify relevant apprenticeships and the best way of providing the training. The National Apprenticeship Service provides a responsive and customer-focused web and telephone service which offers a high quality, tailored experience to each employer.

**National
Apprenticeship
Service**

The business benefits

The benefits of apprenticeships are becoming increasingly obvious to more and more businesses.

It's a fact that apprenticeships develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. Businesses that offer apprenticeships view them as beneficial to their long-term development. According to the British Chambers of Commerce, most employ an apprentice to improve the skills base within their business.

All the support you'll need

We do everything we can to make taking on an apprentice as simple as possible. Our employer teams will be there to help you through the process, along with a dedicated website, telephone service and free impartial advice.

Over
250,000
workplaces in England
offer apprenticeships.



Apprenticeships make GREAT business for employers of all sizes

The facts

82%

Building skills

82% of employers take on apprentices to build the skills capacity within their businesses.



88%

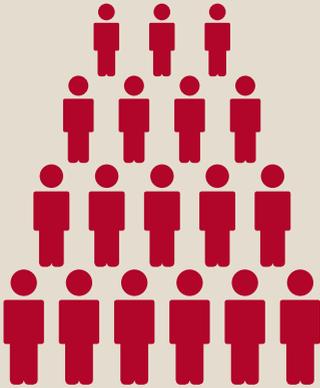
Increased employee satisfaction

88% of apprentice employers believe they lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce, leading to greater loyalty and quality.

75%

Lower recruitment costs

75% of apprentice employers say the programme has helped cut recruitment costs. 80% say that apprenticeships will play a bigger part in their future recruitment policy.



80%

Reduced staff turnover

80% of employers feel that apprenticeships reduce staff turnover.

81%

Attractive to customers

81% of consumers favour companies that employ apprentices.



81%

Greater productivity

81% of apprentice employers say they make their businesses more productive. The average apprenticeship completer increases business productivity by £214 per week.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a way for young people and adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, gaining a real qualification and a real future.

Hiring apprentices help businesses to grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Apprenticeships are available to businesses of all sizes and sectors in England, and can last anything from 12 months to 4 years.

They are linked to job roles or occupations - some 1,500 of them across 170 industries, so we make sure that every apprenticeship is relevant and appropriate both for the apprentice and the business.

There are three levels of apprenticeships available:

Intermediate Level Apprenticeship

(Level 2) - equivalent to five A*-C GCSEs.

Advanced Level Apprenticeship

(Level 3) - equivalent to two A Levels.

Higher Level Apprenticeship

(Levels 4-7) - equivalent to a foundation degree and above.

Degree Apprenticeship

(Levels 6&7) - Full Bachelor's or Master's degree.

Traineeships

A separate education and training programme with work experience helping prepare young people to secure an apprenticeship or other job. Please see **page 16** for more information.

A training organisation will work closely with an employer to ensure that the apprenticeship offered is the most appropriate for the individual's job role, whilst reflecting individual employer and learner needs.

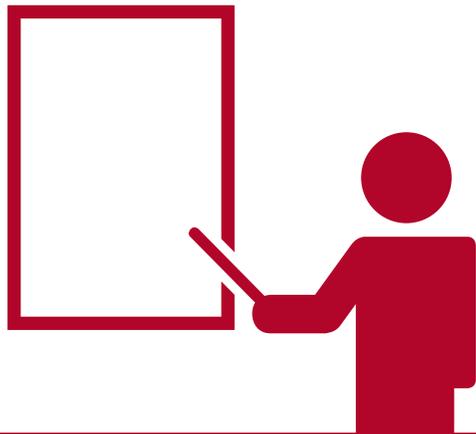
Most of the training is **on-the-job**, working with a mentor to learn job specific skills in the workplace.

Off-the-job training will depend on the occupational area, the training provider and the requirements and wishes of the employer. This training may be delivered in the workplace, through 'day release' or at premises away from the working environment.

The modular style of delivery enables the apprentice to achieve milestones throughout their apprenticeship.

On completion of the apprenticeship the apprentice must be able to undertake a full range of duties, in the range of circumstances appropriate to the job, confidently and competently to the standard set by the industry.

Employment is a fundamental part of an apprenticeship. An apprentice must be employed in a job role with a productive purpose.



What are the employer responsibilities?

As the employer you must give your apprentice an induction into their role and provide on-the job training. You are responsible for paying your apprentice's wages and issuing their contract of employment. As an employee, the apprentice receives the same benefits as other employees.

By employing an apprentice, you have certain requirements to meet.

- Issuing a contract of employment and paying at least the **Apprenticeship National Minimum Wage**. Apprentices who are under 19, or who are over 19 and in the first year of their intermediate level or advanced level apprenticeship, must be paid a minimum of £3.30* per hour. Many businesses pay more.
- Provide apprentices with the same benefits as other employees.

- The **minimum hours of employment** for an apprentice should be at least 30 hours per week. By exception, where the individual's circumstances or the particular nature of employment in a given sector makes this impossible, then an absolute minimum of 16 hours must be met. In such cases the duration of the apprenticeship should be extended.
- All apprentices must have an **Apprenticeship Agreement** between the employer and the apprentice.



* As at October 2015. This rate is for apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age.

Who is involved?

1 The National Apprenticeship Service supports a partnership between the employer, training organisation and apprentice and is part of the Skills Funding Agency.

2 The Skills Funding Agency has a network of quality assured contracted training organisations or colleges of further education who deliver apprenticeship off-the-job training. Each training organisation is open to Ofsted inspections.

3 The employer will normally work with a training organisation who will support the delivery of the training programme, carry out the assessment and deliver the additional skills and knowledge training required to complete the framework, through an agreed training plan.

88%

of employers were satisfied and 69% very satisfied, with the relevance of the training.

Case study



Apprenticeships are providing TechQuarters with highly skilled industrious IT engineers.

Ideal employees

TechQuarters is a London-based IT consultancy company assisting businesses to move to cloud computing. The business offers advanced apprenticeships in IT, software, web and telecoms professionals and currently employs four apprentices.

“We invest in apprentices because they are young, energetic and eager to learn”

Chris Dunning, CEO

“TechQuarters is a young company, so we require our employees to be up-to-date with the latest technologies and to have a hands-on approach.”

Apprentices with TechQuarters gain a wealth of technical qualifications including a Level 3 Diploma in ICT Professional Competence and various Microsoft certificates. Alongside their studies, apprentices are employed as first-line engineers, dealing with customer queries.

Financial benefits

TechQuarter's apprenticeships have proved to be an efficient way to build a skilled workforce, as Chris describes: **"Through apprenticeships we save time and money when it comes to hiring and training staff."** The apprentices' capability to become first and second line engineers within their first three months is a definite cost benefit.

"Throughout their year with us, apprentices get to know the structure of the business, learn about our culture and come to understand our customers. This results in great value for money as they are fully qualified Microsoft professionals and know our services inside out."

"Furthermore, **the fact that they are young and energetic gives them the ability to pick things up quickly,**" adds Chris. "As a young business this is key - employees are required to adapt rapidly, keeping the business lively and up to speed."

Valuable achievement

Former apprentices with TechQuarters have thrived within the company: **"The two team leaders on our support desk started as apprentices, and have been a fundamental part of our expansion,"** says Chris. "They have built up their knowledge, moved into team leader roles, and are training more apprentices."

For the quality and success of its apprenticeships, TechQuarters has been recognised by the National Apprenticeship Awards 2014, where it won Best Small Employer for the London region. The company is planning to build on this and offer more apprenticeships in the future.

"Due to the success of our technical apprentices, we will be offering apprenticeships in the marketing and sales functions this year," says Chris. **"The time that we invest in our apprentices results in our company's growth** - without these fundamental members of the team, TechQuarters would not be where it is today."

What funding is available to an employer towards training costs?

The size of the contribution varies depending on your sector and the age of the apprentice at the start of the training:

- 100 percent of the cost of apprenticeship training if the apprentice is aged 16-18 years old.
- A contribution towards the cost of training if the apprentice is aged 19 and over.
- The Government has announced an additional £60m to fund higher apprenticeships which would cover the cost of the higher apprenticeship training element.

This is paid directly to the organisation that provides and supports the apprenticeship training, in most cases this will be a training organisation. Large employers with a direct contract with the National Apprenticeship Service may receive the funding themselves and deliver aspects of the apprenticeship training.

Employers are responsible for paying their apprentice(s) wages.

The National Audit Office (NAO) concluded that for every £1 of public funding, advanced and intermediate apprenticeships generate estimated economic returns of £28 and £26 respectively.



Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 - 24 year olds (AGE Grant)

You may be eligible for an AGE grant if:

- you're a small (those with fewer than 50 staff) sized employer.
- your apprentice is aged 16 to 24.
- you have not employed an apprentice in the last 12 months.

The grant aims to support businesses who would not otherwise be in a position to recruit individuals aged 16 to 24 into employment through the apprenticeship programme.

An employer, working with an approved Government-funded training organisation, can receive up to five grants in total. All we ask is that an apprentice has not started with you in the last year. Businesses that have received the grant have used it for equipment, accommodation and additional specialist training.

The grant is available for apprenticeship starts up to and including 31 December 2015, subject to eligibility and availability.

Contact the National Apprenticeship Service on freephone 08000 150 600 to check if you're eligible and apply.

“Apprenticeship grants help us get more hands on deck”

Brian May, Managing Director of Berthon Boat Company



Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Higher and degree apprenticeships were introduced to provide apprentices with high level skills most critical for growth.

The Government's ambition is for it to become the norm for young people to achieve their career goals by going into an apprenticeship or to university or - in the case of some higher and degree apprenticeships - doing both.

Higher and degree apprenticeships enable the Government to drive economic growth by targeting specific sectors where advanced skills gaps have been identified.

Developed by employers for employers, higher and degree apprenticeships enable businesses to train more of their employees in the high-level industry-specific skills that are critical for growth in the UK and internationally.

Higher and degree apprenticeships include a range of qualifications at a range of levels from the equivalent of a foundation degree to bachelor's degree and even master's degree level in some sectors.

Higher and degree apprenticeships allow young people and adults to earn while they learn at the highest level and progress into higher skilled occupations.



Over
70
subjects covered, ranging from Automotive and Banking to Aerospace and Nuclear, representing hundreds of job roles.



Traineeships

If you are interested in taking on young people who are not quite 'work ready' then offering a traineeship could be the solution.

What is a Traineeship?

Traineeships give young people, aged 16 to 24, the essential work preparation training, English and maths skills and work experience they need to get an apprenticeship or other job in the future.

Businesses are required to:

- offer at least 100 hours work placement over a maximum of six months.
- enable the young person to develop new skills and behaviours.
- provide a real workplace experience and structured opportunity.
- give a meaningful exit interview and reference.

Traineeships are very flexible and tailored to the needs of the business and the individual.

All training costs are met by Government funding.

Employers are not required to pay the young person taking part in the traineeship but may support trainees with expenses such as transport and meals.

Traineeships are a stepping stone to future success.

Visit greatbusiness.gov.uk/traineeships or call free from a landline **08000 150 600** to find out more.



How do I recruit an apprentice?

Find an Apprenticeship, the job site for apprenticeships, enables employers to advertise their apprenticeship vacancies for free and find candidates who match their criteria.

This not only saves a significant amount of money but is also a convenient way to manage the recruitment process in one place.

Your training organisation will work with you to place your vacancy, manage the process and help you to select your chosen candidate.

Find an Apprenticeship enables you to find the perfect match for each apprenticeship vacancy you advertise. There are over 500,000 users of the website.



Up to

27,000

quality apprenticeship vacancies are available online at any one time. In 2014/15, over 1.5 million applications were made online.

Apprenticeship reforms - What employers need to know

We want to make all apprenticeships world class - a programme that is rigorous, responsive and meets the changing needs of employers and the future economy. We want the new norm to be two equally prestigious routes to a great career - university or an apprenticeship.

Our Apprenticeship reforms are:

- **putting employers in the driving seat** - groups of employers, large and small, working together to design apprenticeships so that they respond to the needs of their industries.
- **simplifying apprenticeships** - replacing long, complex frameworks with short, simple standards, written by employers in a language they understand.
- **increasing the quality of apprenticeships** - introducing more rigorous testing at the end of the apprenticeship to ensure that the apprentice is fully competent and grading to increase stretch.

Through our **funding reforms**, we will put **apprenticeship funds in the hands of employers** so that they can choose the most effective training for their apprentices.

We are **trailing** a simple funding approach for the new employer-led apprenticeship standards in 2014/15, to learn lessons for future delivery. **Trialblazers** are leading the way in implementing the new apprenticeships. They are made up of both large and small employers who are designing the first apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches.

In total, more than 1000 employers are already involved. They are collaborating to design new world-class apprenticeship standards. The first starts on the new employer-led standards will be in 2014/15 and all new apprenticeship starts from 2017/18 will be on the new standards.

Search **Trialblazers** on **www.gov.uk** for more information.

Three simple steps

The National Apprenticeship is on hand to guide you through the simple three-step process to hiring an apprentice.

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- 1** **Decide** on your requirements with an apprenticeship adviser and drive recruitment through our free Find an Apprenticeship service.



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- 2** **Deliver** the apprenticeship, working with a training organisation to reduce the burden on your business.

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- 3** **Develop** your apprentice and enter them into awards and competitions to put your business on the map.



There has never been a better time to employ an apprentice

Visit greatbusiness.gov.uk/apprenticeships or call the National Apprenticeship Service free from a landline on **08000 150 600**

For more information

Tweet us:

twitter.com/apprenticeships

Follow us:

[linkedin.com/company/national-apprenticeship-service](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-apprenticeship-service)

Visit us:

greatbusiness.gov.uk/apprenticeships

Call us:

08000 150 600

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NAS-P-100138

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