

Appendix A: NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS SERVICE INFORMATION

What are Apprenticeships?

They are work-based training programmes designed around the needs of employers, which lead to national recognised qualifications. You can use Apprenticeships to train both new and existing employees. Funding is available to train apprentices.

Apprenticeships are designed by the Sector Skills Councils, while the National Apprenticeship Service helps to fund the training. Business representatives from the relevant industry sector work with the Sector Skills Councils to develop the course content. Because they genuinely understand your business, the training will be relevant for your industry. Over 100,000 employers in over 160,000 workplaces offer frameworks across a wide range of industry sectors.

Depending on the sector and job role an Apprenticeship can take anything between one and four years to complete. It is a package of on-the-job training and qualifications.

Facts in numbers

- Over 80% of those employers who employ apprentices agree they make their workplace more productive.
- 81% of consumers favour using a company which takes on apprentices.
- The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is £2.60 per hour, however many employers prefer to pay more, and research shows that the average salary is approx £170 per week.
- Employers who take on a 16-18 year old apprentice only pay their salary. The Government will fund their training.
- There are more than 200 different types of Apprenticeships available offering over 1,200 job roles.
- 92% of employers who employ apprentices believe that Apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce.
- 83% of employers who employ apprentices rely on their Apprenticeships programme to provide the skilled workers that they need for the future.
- One in five employers is hiring more apprentices to help them through the tough economic climate.

Levels

There are three levels of Apprenticeship available:

1 - Intermediate Level Apprenticeships - Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a Level 2 Competence Qualification, Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification.

2 - Advanced Level Apprenticeships - Apprentices work towards work-based learning such as a Level 3 Competence Qualification, Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification.

3 - Higher Apprenticeships - Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a Level 4 Competence Qualification, Functional Skills and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation Degree.

Types of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are available in a wide range of industry sectors with employers from large national companies such as Sainsbury's, BMW and Orange to smaller local companies.

There are more than 200 different types of Apprenticeships available offering over 1,200 job roles within a variety of industry sectors ranging from engineering, business admin, construction and hospitality.

Training and Employment

As Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes, most of the training is 'on the job' – at your premises. The rest can be provided by a local college or by a specialist learning provider. As the employer you must give your apprentices an induction into their role and provide on-the-job training. You are also responsible for paying your apprentices' wages.

Employment must be for at least 30 hours per week, except in the minority of circumstances where the learner cannot complete the full 30 hours. In these cases employment must be for more than 16 hours per week. A learning provider will provide an employer representative who will be able to support and guide you. They will work with you to:

- Help you decide which Apprenticeship is right for you
- Explain the way that Apprenticeships might work for you and if funding is available
- Agree a training plan with your apprentice
- Recruit an apprentice or support your existing staff into Apprenticeships
- Manage the training and evaluation
- Ensure that national quality standards are met and deliver integrated, coherent training

Funding

Apprenticeship funding is available from the National Apprenticeship Service. The size of the contribution varies depending on your sector and the age of the candidate. If the apprentice is aged 16–18 years old, you will receive 100 per cent of the cost of the training; if they are 19-24 years old, you will receive up to 50 per cent; if they are 25 years old or over you may only get a contribution depending on the sector and area in which you operate. This is paid directly to the organisation that provides and supports the Apprenticeship; in most cases this will be a learning provider. Large employers with a direct contract with the National Apprenticeship Service may receive the funding themselves.

National Minimum Wage

A National Minimum Wage for apprentices was introduced on 1 October 2010. The wage applies to all apprentices aged under 19; and apprentices aged 19 or over in the first year of their apprenticeship. The apprentice minimum wage is currently £2.60 per hour and applies to time working, plus time spent training that is part of the Apprenticeship. Employers are free to pay above the minimum wage and many do so, but employers must ensure that they are paying their apprentices at least the minimum wage. If an apprentice is on a higher wage, the employer must continue to pay that for the remainder of the training or until the apprentice becomes eligible for the full national minimum wage.