

Employer's Guide to Apprenticeships

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a genuine job with an accompanying assessment and skills development programme. It is a way for individuals to earn while they learn, gaining valuable skills and knowledge in a specific job role. The apprentice gains this through a wide mix of learning in the workplace, formal off-the-job training and the opportunity to practise new skills in a real work environment. Apprenticeships benefit employers and individuals, and by boosting the skills of the workforce they help to improve economic productivity.

How do they work?

Apprentices spend part of their paid working week developing new skills through structured training and learning activities. The exact amount depends on the apprenticeship being delivered, but all training is planned and designed to help the apprentice become fully competent in their role. A workplace mentor plays a vital role in the apprentice's development, providing ongoing guidance, coaching and industry insight, helping them apply their learning in the workplace and develop the confidence, knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

Who are apprenticeships for?

Anyone over the age of 16 and not in full-time education can apply for an apprenticeship. Employers can offer apprenticeships to new applicants or use them to upskill or retrain existing employees. Apprenticeships equip individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours they need for specific job roles, future employment and progression.

Benefits of hiring apprentices

Hiring an apprentice is a productive and effective way for any business to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. Employers who have an established apprenticeship programme reported that productivity in their workplace had improved by 75%. Other benefits that apprenticeships contribute towards include:

- Increasing employee satisfaction
- Upskill current staff
- Reducing staff turnover
- Reducing recruitment costs
- Financial benefits

Employer responsibilities

Apprenticeships must be based on a genuine job role that enables the apprentice to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by their apprenticeship standard. Employers are responsible for providing suitable employment, paying the apprentice's wages and supporting their development throughout the programme. This includes providing meaningful workplace experience, access to planned training and the support of a workplace mentor to help the apprentice apply their learning and progress towards occupational competence.

Financial Benefits

Apprenticeships offer a cost-effective way to recruit, develop and retain talent. Depending on the apprentice and your organisation's circumstances, a range of government funding and financial incentives may be available.

- Employers do not pay Employer National Insurance Contributions for apprentices under the age of 25 on earnings below the qualifying threshold.
- Employers can receive a **£1,000 incentive payment** when employing an apprentice aged 16 to 18, or an apprentice aged 19 to 24 who is a care leaver or has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Employers can receive **up to £2,000** when recruiting an eligible **Foundation Apprentice** to support the additional costs of employing and developing young people entering the workforce.
- From **1 October 2026**, eligible **non-levy paying employers** can receive a **£2,000 hiring payment** when recruiting a new apprentice aged 16 to 24, subject to government eligibility criteria.

Costs Involved

The cost of the training and assessment for the apprentice will depend on the age of the apprentice, the size of the company and whether the company pays into the apprenticeship levy.

Employer Type	Apprentice Age at Start	Government Contribution	Employer Contribution
Non-Levy Paying Employer (SME)	16-24	100% of training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum)	0%
Non-Levy Paying Employer (SME)	25+	95% of training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum)	5%
Levy Paying Employer with sufficient levy funds	Any age	Funded through the employer's Growth and Skills Levy account	No additional employer contribution up to available levy funds
Levy Paying Employer with insufficient levy funds	16-24	100% of training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum)	0%
Levy Paying Employer with insufficient levy funds	25+	75% of training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum)	25%

What we need from you

Before we can start your apprentice recruitment campaign, you'll need to complete the following steps:

- A Job Description for the apprentice vacancy
- Create a TAS Account and link to Halesowen College
- Signed apprenticeship paperwork
- Employer Liability Insurance certificate

We'll arrange the health and safety visit and support you every step of the way, making the process as simple and straightforward as possible.

Once everything is in place, we can advertise your vacancy, screen applicants and provide you with a shortlist of suitable candidates, saving you time and simplifying the recruitment process.

Contact Details

Whether you're looking to grow your business, develop existing staff or recruit new talent, we can help you find the right apprenticeship solution. Contact our Employer Engagement Team to get started

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