

A woman with dark hair and safety glasses is focused on a task, possibly using a power tool. A man with grey hair and safety glasses stands beside her, observing her work. They are in a workshop or factory setting with a wooden wall in the background.

Recruiting an Apprentice in England



Complete
Apprenticeship
Guide



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Why Apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships offer an excellent pathway for employers to build a skilled, motivated workforce while addressing specific skills gaps. They allow businesses to train individuals in line with their operational needs. Apprentices “earn while they learn,” working alongside employees while receiving structured training.

Key benefits include:

- ✓ **Tailored Training:** Employers can collaborate with training providers to customise the curriculum.
- ✓ **Government Support:** Financial incentives and subsidies are available to reduce training costs.
- ✓ **Diverse Talent Pool:** Apprenticeships attract a wide range of candidates, including school leavers and career changers.
- ✓ **Long-Term Growth:** Develop talent internally, leading to a more skilled and loyal workforce.

Apprenticeships are not only a cost-effective way to develop skills but also an investment in your organisation’s future. By building a pipeline of talented individuals trained to meet your business’s needs, you strengthen the foundation for sustainable growth. Whether addressing current skills shortages or preparing for future challenges, apprenticeships are a proven strategy to stay competitive.



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Alternative options

Before committing to an apprenticeship, consider these alternatives for workforce development:

T Levels

Industry placements for 16-19-year-olds provide businesses with access to talent while helping students gain experience. T Levels involve a combination of classroom learning and practical experience through 45-day placements, making them ideal for gaining early exposure to skilled young people.

Supported Internships

Unpaid work placements for individuals aged 16-24 with additional needs, supported by a job coach. These internships are invaluable for fostering an inclusive workplace and tapping into a diverse talent pool.

Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)

Level 4-5 qualifications for employees seeking part-time or full-time study. These programs are excellent for upskilling existing employees, enabling them to take on advanced roles within your company.

Multiply Programme

Free numeracy courses to enhance employee skills. This program addresses foundational skills gaps, particularly for roles requiring basic numerical competencies.



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How much will it cost?

Understanding costs is vital:

- **Apprenticeship Levy:** Employers with a pay bill over £3 million annually contribute to the Apprenticeship Levy. This levy is a tax to fund apprenticeship programs, ensuring that large employers reinvest in workforce development.
- **Non-Levy Employers:** Smaller businesses pay 5% of training costs; the government covers the remaining 95%. This funding structure makes apprenticeships accessible even for smaller organisations with limited budgets.
- **Full Funding:** Employers with fewer than 50 employees may qualify for 100% funding for apprentices aged 16-18 or those aged 19-24 with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).
- **Financial Incentives:** Employers can receive up to £1,000 for hiring apprentices meeting specific criteria, such as young individuals or those with additional needs.
- **National Insurance Exemptions:** Employers don't pay contributions for apprentices under 25 earning below the higher tax rate.

When evaluating the cost of an apprenticeship, consider the return on investment. Apprentices bring enthusiasm, new ideas, and dedication, which can outweigh the financial outlay.



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Deciding the salary and benefits

Apprentices must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for apprentices. Many businesses opt to pay above this rate to attract and retain talent.

Factors to Consider:

- 1 Align salaries with workforce pay structures to promote fairness and motivation.
- 2 Offer regular salary increments to reward progress and skill acquisition.
- 3 Include additional benefits such as travel reimbursement, uniforms, or flexible working arrangements.
- 4 Research competitors' packages for similar roles to ensure your offer remains competitive.

Providing an attractive compensation package is essential for recruiting top talent. It signals to potential apprentices that your organisation values their contribution and is committed to their growth.



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Finding the right apprenticeship



To find a suitable apprenticeship:

- **Identify Job Tasks:** List key responsibilities the apprentice will handle. Consider how these tasks align with your organisation's broader goals and objectives.
- **Explore Standards:** Apprenticeship standards outline job-specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors (KSBs). [Visit the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#) for available standards.
- **Consult Training Providers:** Seek advice on standards that match your needs. Providers can offer valuable insights into aligning apprenticeship training with your operational requirements.

Selecting the standard

There are over 700 approved apprenticeship standards ranging from Level 2 (entry-level roles) to Level 7 (equivalent to a master's degree).

Use keyword searches and filters on the Institute's website to identify the best match.

Keep an open mind when exploring standards. Even if a standard does not initially seem like a perfect fit, adjustments to the job role or training plan can often make it suitable.



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Selecting a training provider

A training provider delivers off-the-job training.

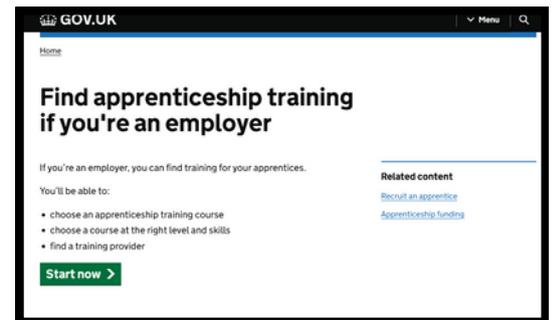
To choose one:

- **Leverage Local Networks:** Use Chambers of Commerce or Careers Hubs.
- **Seek Recommendations:** Ask peers for provider referrals.
- **Use Government Tools:** Visit the [Find a Training Provider](#) service.

Ask providers questions such as:

- How will the training meet business needs?
- What support will apprentices receive?
- What flexibility is available in delivery models?

Partnering with the right training provider is crucial. Providers not only deliver technical training but also support apprentices in developing soft skills essential for workplace success.



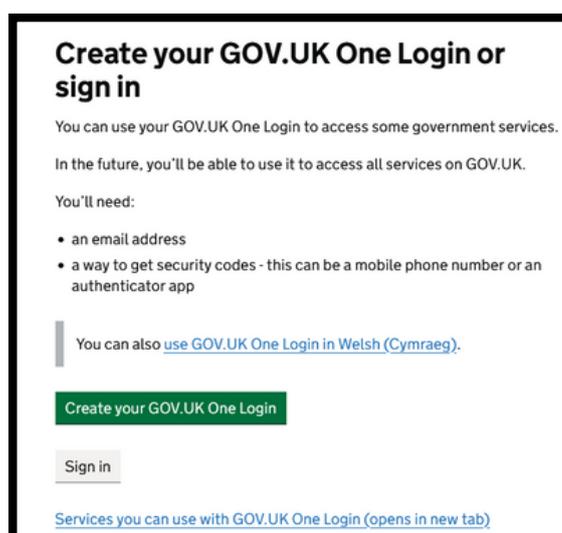
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Your apprenticeship account

A Employers must create an Apprenticeship Service Account to access funding, reserve funds, and manage vacancies.

Key Steps:

- Register using your Government Gateway login.
- Reserve funding in advance.
- Convert reservations into commitments when apprentices and providers are confirmed.



The apprenticeship account simplifies administrative tasks, ensuring that employers can efficiently manage their apprenticeship programs.



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Advertising your vacancy

Effectively advertise your apprenticeship to attract the right candidates:

- **Find an Apprenticeship (FAA):** A free government platform for advertising vacancies.
- **Local Schools and Colleges:** Share vacancies directly with career advisors.
- **Social Media:** Use platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter for cost-effective promotion.
- **Training Providers:** Utilise their networks to reach pre-apprenticeship candidates.

Consider writing engaging job descriptions that highlight the benefits of the role and the unique aspects of working for your organisation.



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Manage your adverts on FAA

Create and manage adverts using your Apprenticeship Account. Personalise applications by adding custom questions to better assess candidates. Link FAA with your HR system for seamless integration.

Widening access to apprenticeships

Broaden your reach by:

- Writing inclusive job descriptions.
- Reaching out to community groups.
- Offering flexible working arrangements.
- Providing reasonable adjustments for candidates with additional needs.

Inclusive recruitment practices not only expand your candidate pool but also contribute to a more diverse and innovative workforce.

The application process

Simplify and encourage applications:

- Offer multiple application formats, such as CVs, cover letters, or video statements.
- Attend career fairs to connect with candidates directly.
- Partner with your training provider for assistance in shortlisting.



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The selection process

Design an inclusive, fair selection process:

- Use structured interviews and competency-based assessments.
- Provide interview questions in advance.
- Offer guaranteed interviews to underrepresented groups.
- Clearly communicate interview logistics, including dress codes and travel reimbursements.

Innovative recruitment practices, such as video applications or work samples, can help candidates showcase their potential beyond traditional formats.

Agreeing expectations and support

Employers, apprentices, and training providers must formalise agreements:

- **Employment Contract:** Ensure compliance with employment laws.
- **Apprenticeship Agreement:** Confirm employment and training details.
- **Training Plan:** Outline responsibilities and training hours.

Regular progress reviews are essential, supported by mentoring and feedback. Providing a robust support system fosters the apprentice's growth and ensures program success.



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Useful links and support

- **Apprenticeship Ambassador Network**: Connect with experienced employers.
- **Roadmap to a Quality Apprenticeship**: Detailed government guidelines.
- **Inclusive Recruitment Guide by CIPD**: Best practices for inclusive hiring.
- **Social Mobility Commission Toolkit**: Practical ideas for increasing diversity.
- **Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education**: Guidance on selecting and delivering high-quality apprenticeship standards.

By following these steps, you can successfully recruit apprentices who will contribute to the growth and success of your business.

