

Apprenticeships Review

Briefing

Guide to Apprenticeships

Traditional apprenticeships, where a young person agreed to stay with an employer for an agreed period of time, during which they would learn and gain work experience in a specific trade or craft, began to disappear in the 1980's. Changes in the labour market reducing the scale of large manufacturing and industrial units impacted on the number of training places available. However, employers still required young people to train in specific skills and the modern apprenticeship scheme was developed to meet this need.

The Modern Apprenticeship allows young people to be employed on a full wage and learn new skills based in the workplace and at college. This enables the young person to gain relevant work experience and skills that equip them for future employment. The training is based around the achievement of National Vocation Qualifications which are based on accreditation of competence.

The Apprenticeship Programme

Apprenticeships are available at four different levels:

- Young Apprenticeships – aimed at 14 – 16 year olds in school at NVQ Level 1 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades D-G)
- Foundation Apprentices at NVQ Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades A-C)
- Advanced Apprenticeships at NVQ level 3 (equivalent to 2 A levels/1 vocation A level)
- Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4 equivalent to HNC, HND and degree level and Level 5 postgraduate level).

A young person will collect evidence of competence in the workplace which is then assessed by a training provider. To complete an apprenticeship at levels 2 and 3, young people must complete the following elements of the framework. They will attend college or a training provider for one day per month for assessment to obtain technical certificate which is supported by knowledge gained through attending training delivered by the training provider. This will include the Key Skills

of literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Entry requirements at this level are 5 GCSE at grades to D-G, but this can be varied according to the candidate's experience. At level 3 it is 5 GCSEs A – C and this is non negotiable.

Employers' benefits

Apprentices provide the benefits of:

- specialist skills, expertise and new technologies learnt through gaining the qualifications
- avoid skill shortages in the future by having a ready trained workforce
- enables skills to be tailored to their business requirements
- increase motivation of employees
- role models to other employees how careers can progress
- enhances reputation as a good employer.

Young people benefit by:

- enhancing skills and expertise
- improve career development and advancement opportunities
- achieving a recognised qualification
- paid employment.

Programme Led Apprenticeships

Programme-Led Apprenticeships are a way for young people to start their apprenticeship qualification without being in full-time employment. They also enable employers who may not be able to support apprentices through a whole apprenticeship framework to offer training opportunities. Programme - Led Apprenticeships can begin studying parts of the Apprenticeship framework at a learning provider until a suitable employer is found where they can move to a full Apprenticeship framework. Apprentices on this scheme can undertake study towards their Apprenticeship at a learning provider or they can undergo training in the workplace. Young people aged 16 – 18 receive the Education Maintenance Allowance during this training.

National Apprenticeships Service (NAS)

In January 2008 the Government published its strategy for Apprenticeships "World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking talent,

building skills for all” as a response to the Leitch Review which indicated the need for improved skills training provision to increase sustainable employment. As a response a National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) was introduced in April 2009. This service supports employers, apprenticeship providers and apprentices, offering advice and guidance on the process.

The Vacancy Matching Service (VMS) part of the NAS matches potential apprentices with employer vacancies.

Funding Apprenticeships

Apprentices receive a wage and on-the-job training from their employer, formal training is usually funded by the Learning and Skills Council who commission colleges and other training providers to provide the teaching and assessment element. Full funding is available for apprentices aged 16 – 18 and some is available for 18 – 24 year olds. This funding is paid directly to the training provider that supports the apprentice.

Learning and Skills Councils will not exist after April next year when funding for education for 16-19 year olds is moving to local authorities.

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