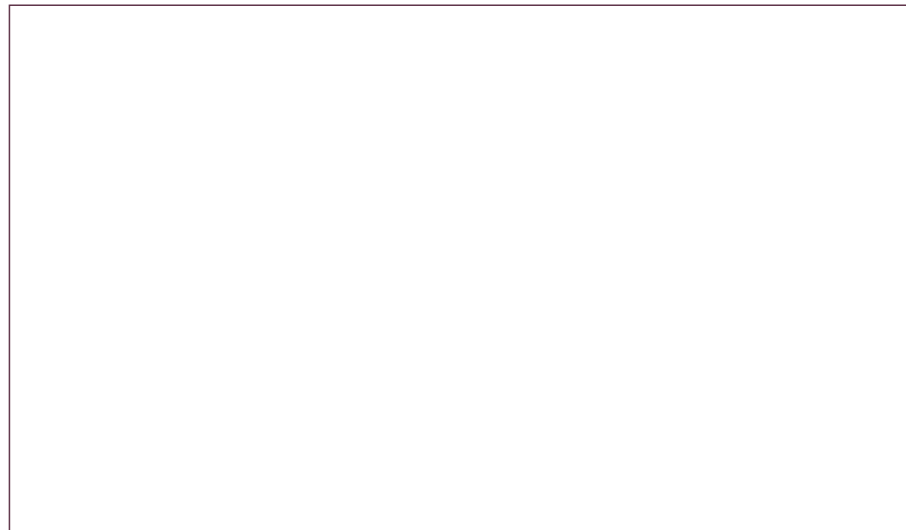


Your local Training Provider



This handbook was developed through the South West and East of England Accelerated Quality Improvement (AQI) project.

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Want to look after your business?
An employer's handbook



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Who your training providers are

Why work with us?

If you have already expressed an interest in providing a work placement, are taking on a new recruit or training one of your existing employees, we hope this guide will assist you in understanding the services and support which we can provide, and your role in the process.

Who are your Training Providers?

A group of training providers in the Eastern Region have joined together with a common aim, to fulfil the training needs of young people, our workforce of tomorrow. By working together as a partnership we are able to use our joint resources to satisfy the needs of local employers in a wide range of vocational areas.

At present our partners include:

- Hertford Regional College
- The College of West Anglia
- Bedford College
- Norfolk Training Services
- Bedford Training Group
- Peterborough Regional College
- City College Norwich
- Oaklands College
- West Herts College
- North Herts College
- Harlow College
- Ridgmond Training
- College of North West London

Why work with us?

The group works in conjunction with many employers at any one time, both large and small, to deliver a wide range of training in many areas. At varying levels these include Electrical Installations, Motor Vehicle, Engineering, Trowel Occupations, Carpentry and Joinery, Painting and Decorating, Hospitality, Catering, Retail, Customer Service, Floristry, Early Years Care, Health and Social Care, Administration, Information Technology, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy.

All our programmes are tailored to meet the needs of the company and the individual learner. We adapt our programmes to ensure that the skills learners need to be more effective at work are delivered. In addition, our programmes give learners a nationally recognised qualification to add to their personal curriculum vitae.

What is Work-based Learning?

Work-based Learning is part of a national programme of government funded provision to aid employees of the future. It aims to develop an individual's knowledge and skills within the workplace environment and presents real opportunities for young people.

Over 100,000 employers are currently developing their employees in this way, ranging from small employers who employ less than 5 staff to household names such as Asda, Next and Rolls Royce.

How can Work-based Learning help your business?

We know that recruiting the right member of staff for your company and ensuring that they have the relevant skills and knowledge to do the job you require will be of great importance to you. Both local and national employers recognise that if they can work with a young person with potential at an early age, he/she can be moulded into a first class employee. Investing in young people not only means an investment in your business but also in your industry and ensures that in a few years time it will continue to have a high calibre of management. We can assist you in these activities through our work-based learning programmes, which will provide you with a number of key benefits, which include:

- A National Vocational Qualification providing your employee with the knowledge and skills that are immediately beneficial to your business, enhancing customer satisfaction and improving your profits.
- By investing in your staff you will enhance their morale and motivation increasing staff and company performance and productivity.
- Using this form of recruitment aids in reducing costs of training and recruitment.
- This training will demonstrate your commitment to staff development, which will increase staff retention.

An assurance of quality

Starting up with your learner

Quality Assurance

All work-based learning providers are government funded. In turn for this funding we are rigorously monitored by government bodies. They check that we are spending these funds correctly by delivering our training schemes to the highest quality standards.

Apart from being inspected by external bodies we also have our own quality assurance system in place to ensure we can give the best possible service to our learners and the companies they work with. The best way to judge strengths and weaknesses within our Apprenticeship schemes is by asking those who are receiving the service to give comments. From time to time you and your learner maybe asked to participate in giving us feedback to help fulfil these quality assurance processes.

Getting your new learner started

Whether the learner is an existing employee or a new learner that has been placed with you there are a number of details that we have to cover with you to get your learner started and to fulfil our funding agreement.

The first of these is a pre-placement Health and Safety check on your premises. This is generally done on the first visit and will take about an hour. This is purely to check that the learner is working in a safe environment and to give advice if needed. We have a **duty of care** to all our learners to ensure their safety at all times.

On our second visit we will need to complete a series of documents with you and the learner to sign him/her on to the scheme. This normally takes about an hour and will require both your signatures. This is also the visit where we will finalise the decision about the specifics of the Apprenticeship framework that the learner will be undertaking.

On our next visit we will compile an "Individual Training Plan" with you and your learner. This document is a comprehensive plan of action to make sure we fulfil all of your learner's individual training and development needs. As stated earlier in this booklet training will take place in the workplace and off-the-job. They need to complement each other and are fundamental for successful completion of the Apprenticeship. The plan is a flexible working document, which will contain target dates for training and assessment and show progress as the learner completes their framework.

Subsequent visits will be to assess your learner carrying out duties within the workplace: to prove that they can perform tasks that they have learnt, to review targets and give feedback on progress, and to gain feedback or deal with any other queries that you or your learner may have.

All of these visits will be on your company premises where the learner is working and at a time that is suitable for you and the needs of your business.

Employers play a vital role in supporting learners to develop competence. One aspect of this role involves the gathering and recognition of evidence of competence. The training provider will provide workshops for employers in respect of work-based learning recording skills and expect that the employer/supervisor will attend this important training.



Training providers reserve the right to withdraw the learner from the programme if necessary and/or amend the terms and conditions of the agreement if it is seen to be in the interests of the learner.

The employer's commitment involves the following:

- Pay the learner the salary/wage (complying with the National Minimum Wage legislation - www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw/index.htm) as agreed between all parties and in compliance with the Requirements for Funding WBL which states that the minimum be £80 per week. Ensure that the learner's working hours should not normally be less than 30 hours or exceed 40 hours per week (including college time).
- Induct your learner in their first week by showing them around your business, introducing them to the people they will be working with, training them in the Health and Safety of your workplace and providing them with basic information about the job, which they will be doing.
- Identify staff within your business that will be responsible for your learner.
- Training the learner in your company's rules and procedures, policies and practices.
- Assist us in identifying the learner's individual training and development needs and construct a training plan to fulfil these needs.
- Ensure that your learner's job includes tasks that he/she has to do in order to develop and learn and eventually complete the Apprenticeship.
- Allowing time for your learner to complete his/her work-based portfolio of evidence and attend off-the-job training sessions at agreed times.
- Call a meeting with us if you have any concerns about any aspects of your learners training and development.
- Meet regularly with your assessor to review your learner's progress and make written comments on our documentation.
- Allow college staff reasonable access to the learner during work time.
- Take part in discussions with auditors, internal and external, when the learner's programme is being inspected.
- Allow inspectors to take part in discussions with the learner during the inspection process.
- Provide opportunities for your learner to demonstrate their competence in areas that they are being assessed in during assessment visits from your assessor, and sign statements confirming the learner's competence in specific activities.
- Ensure the learner has equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination on the grounds of age, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, race or sexual orientation.
- Ensure the learner is not bullied, harassed or made to feel unwelcome in the workplace.
- Inform the learner about your company Health and Safety policy and who is responsible for Health and Safety matters.
- Comply with all relevant statutory duties in respect of Equality and Diversity and Health, Safety and Welfare, thereby maintaining the working environment to a legally acceptable standard and to register the premises with the appropriate authorities as required by law.
- Access the risks to which your learner is exposed at work and eliminate or control these risks to the lowest reasonable level.
- Ensure the learner will not be left to work alone or unsupervised.
- Provide (at no cost) the learner with the protective clothing and equipment necessary to carry out their duties and provide suitable storage and training in its use.
- Report any accidents or near misses concerning the learner to us immediately.
- Maintain for the duration of the learner programme adequate Employers Liability/Public Liability and where appropriate Motor Vehicle Insurance and that insurers have been informed of participation in the Apprenticeship scheme.
- The learner has the right to join a trade union.
- Notify the provider of any unauthorised absences or when a learner leaves their employment as soon as either event occurs.
- Notify the provider of any absence due to sickness that exceeds 21 consecutive calendar days.

Some courses may carry a fee or service charge.

This should be discussed with the Training Provider prior to the learner starting the Apprenticeship programme.

About the Apprenticeship

What are the qualifications?

What is an Apprenticeship?

An Apprenticeship is the name given to the qualifications that are carried out mainly in the workplace. They are designed around the skills people use at work and cover all 'types' and levels of work. There are five levels within the Apprenticeship family ranging from Level One up to Level Five. The most common levels carried out are Level Two Apprenticeships. These programmes usually last between two and three years. The Level Three qualification is known as an Advanced Apprenticeship and these are for learners who have some form of responsibility in their job and will be developing skills to become a team leader/supervisor. These programmes usually last up to three years.

Whether a learner is on a Level Two or Level Three Apprenticeship they must be employed by the company and have a contract of employment and a job description within 13 weeks of commencement of employment where they are carrying out their qualification. Every Apprenticeship is made up of the same three components. These include the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification), Technical Certificate and Key Skills, which combine together to provide a framework of development for the learner.

NVQ - National Vocational Qualification

Each NVQ is made up of a number of units of competence, which set out what an individual must be able to do in a given area and to what standard. The qualification standards are set by national employer-led bodies, who are familiar with the skills that are required to perform effectively in the particular job role.

Each individual unit of the NVQ is assessed and credited on the learners' ability to show competence in that area of their job. Assessment activities normally take place within the workplace by a qualified NVQ Training Assessor.

Technical Certificate*

Each Technical Certificate varies depending on the programme and area of learning that is chosen. These are nationally recognised qualifications in their own right as an awarding body has approved them. The length of time taken to achieve a technical certificate is also dependent on what area of learning it is linked to and how many hours should be spent teaching it. For example, the area of learning delivered for the Level Two Catering Apprenticeship has two one day workshops, which make up the technical certificate. However the Level Two Motor Vehicle Apprenticeship has a two year technical certificate attached to it. Either way this component of the Apprenticeship framework is taught to learners to develop their knowledge and understanding to complement what they are learning through workplace activities. This component of the Apprenticeship can be learnt in a number of places but is generally known as off-the-job training.

* Currently Hairdressing Apprenticeships do not require a technical certificate.

Key Skills

Key Skills are the last component of an Apprenticeship framework and like NVQs they can be achieved at Levels One to Four. Key Skills address the skills we all require in our every day lives. They consist of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology. Working with Others and Improving Own Learning are known as 'Wider' Key Skills and form part of a small ratio of Apprenticeships. The levels to which Key Skills are required is determined by the awarding bodies and vary depending on the area of learning being studied. Key Skills are considered by employers to be an essential part of occupational competence, which is why they have been linked to every Apprenticeship. Key Skills are delivered during off-the-job training along side the Technical Certificate but can also be demonstrated during workplace activities. The NVQ Training Assessor would be able to pick this up during a workplace assessment.

Get yourself a learner

Recruiting and nurturing

How do I recruit a learner?

Our recruitment process aims to attract learners who are best suited to the work and training you can offer. As providers we have strong links with the Careers Service, Schools and other external organisations to attract as many suitable learners as possible. Having discussed your particular needs we will match your requirements with the skills and experience of our learners and short list those whom we feel would be most suited to your company. Alternatively a hopeful candidate that you wish to be considered for an Apprenticeship may have already approached you. Either way, as the employer, the final decision regarding selection will be yours. Once you have made your final decision you take your learner on as an employed member of your staff.



Looking after the learner

Having just taken on a learner you want to know what you can expect from us and what is expected of you as an employer. These young people need to be motivated and looked after as with any new employee and this requires a commitment from both you and us the training provider. It is important that the partnership we are embarking on has both of us in agreement as to who does what and when for the learner/employee.

We may need to provide training to your learner off work premises for him/her to gain the skills and knowledge needed to perform their job role efficiently and effectively. We will always try to ensure that this off-the-job training is done at a time that is suitable for all parties. Although your learner will have the abilities to do the job he/she has been taken on for, these abilities will need to be developed in the workplace as well which is where you can help your learner.

We will also need to visit your learner at work to assess their competence in carrying out the skills that they have learnt through yourselves and us. Again these sessions are always booked at a time that best suits you and your business. The other main thing we can both do for the learner is to make him/her feel as relaxed and welcome as possible in their new working/learning environments. This way he/she will feel content and will become the loyal and committed employee that you are looking for.

Apprenticeship partners

Roles and responsibilities

The Partnership Agreement

To make the Apprenticeship scheme work effectively for you, your learner and ourselves, we need to enter into a partnership agreement. A summary of this agreement is outlined below. This agreement is crucial if the learner is to successfully complete their Apprenticeship framework.

The Training Provider will undertake the following:

- Assess the prospective learner in order to determine the most suitable programme for their abilities and your business needs.
- Induct the learner to the programme including the explanation and importance of Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety and Bullying and Harassment.
- Explain about work-based learning, how the framework is achieved and what everyone's roles are.
- Provide the learner with written information to support their induction, which they can refer to later if needed.
- Assess the learner's current skills, knowledge and qualifications and identify any personal circumstances, which may affect learning or training.
- Work with yourselves and the learner to produce an individual plan of training and assessment to work towards.
- Provide appropriate off the job training sessions to support the skills that the learner is developing in the workplace, in order that they can achieve their qualification.
- Keep you informed of what the learner is covering during off-the-job training.
- Conduct a thorough review at Week 6 (probation period) and act on findings.
- Ensure that the training is appropriate for the learner and your company and fulfils the requirements of the awarding bodies.
- Meet regularly with you to review the progress of your learner, listen to your feedback on their performance and any other issues that may arise.
- Agree and record actions and targets between the reviews and amend the individual training plan accordingly.

- Help the learner to understand what evidence to collect and match to the standards of their qualification.
- Formally assess the learner's competence and give constructive feedback following this to ensure they know how they are progressing.
- Make sure that the learner understands the appeals process and how to act upon it if they feel that they have been unfairly assessed.
- Ensure learners know what to do if they feel that they are being unfairly treated with regards to equal opportunities and bullying and harassment during their off-the-job training and in their workplace.
- Act on any complaints received by yourselves or the learner.
- Provide a safe working environment for the learner at all times during off the job training.
- Check the learner's understanding of Health and Safety risk awareness.
- Monitor Health and Safety practices whilst the learner is in his/her off-the-job learning environment and in the workplace on an ongoing basis as a duty of care to the learner.
- Investigate any accidents or near misses involving the learner and agree preventative measures with those responsible.
- Work with Awarding Bodies to recognise learner achievement.
- Provide ongoing support to employers and their staff in delivering all aspects of the learner's programme.

