

Parents & carers FAQ's for starting an apprenticeship

Is my son, daughter or the young person I care for allowed to do an apprenticeship if they need to stay in school until they are 18?

Absolutely yes. An apprenticeship is a credible post 16 alternative to going to college. It is also a credible alternative to going to University after studying for A levels or completing a college vocational study programme.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a programme of study that is undertaken alongside a job, which meets the Government's policy on participation because it offers a structured on the job training programme. Much of what is studied will depend upon the chosen vocational area, but there is a standard structure of knowledge, skills and behaviours which need to be demonstrated and evidenced, as well as the requirement to continue to improve English and maths alongside any mandatory qualification. An apprenticeship is also supported by a Government approved training provider who will put in place an individual training plan and work with the apprentice and employer to ensure that it is being met.

How do you find an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship requires a person to be employed to do a job that is relevant to the apprenticeship they want to complete. There are a number of ways to find an apprenticeship, for example:

- Go to www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship to register with the National Apprenticeship Service. You can search, apply and sign up for alerts to let you know when a new vacancy is registered on the service.
- Check on-line job sites putting Apprentice in the search title.
- Get in touch with companies that employ people to do the job you would like to do.
- Ask around. Friends, family, neighbours may know of an opportunity for you to explore.

If they are not in school do we have to pay anything?

An apprentice is not allowed by law to pay for their apprenticeship, the cost is covered by the government and the employer if applicable. If an employer asks for a contribution to the apprenticeship the provider must be informed so they can resolve the issue. This also applies if the apprentice leaves the employer for some reason before the apprenticeship is completed, or shortly after it is completed.

Will there be things that need to be purchased, like tools, equipment or uniforms?

This will depend upon the apprenticeship. If there are essential items like Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as boots, overalls, hard hats etc. these should be provided by the employer, as well as any uniform they expect the apprentice to wear. However, there might be some equipment that needs to be purchased which would be the property of the apprentice. It is important to check this before your son or daughter sign up for their apprenticeship.

How much does an apprentice get paid?

Many employers recognise the benefits of an apprentice and will pay a wage in line with the role being offered, however the minimum wage for an Apprentice is £3.90 per hour for those apprentices aged between 16 and 18. If apprenticeship is started at the age of 19, or if the apprentice turns 19 in the first year of your apprenticeship, the employer can only pay this wage for the first year. In the second and/or subsequent years they must pay the national minimum wage for the age. For more information see www.gov.uk/minimumwage.

Will we still be entitled to Child Benefit and any tax credits?

It is unlikely that you will continue to receive benefits for the young person once they start an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are considered as employment and earning an income, albeit on a reduced rate in some cases, and therefore are no longer considered dependents. However, it would be advisable to find out from the Department for Work and Pensions what the impact to the family benefits would be, or search www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators. In some cases the young person themselves may be entitled to benefits depending upon the circumstances.

Can an apprentice work as a self-employed worker or a subcontractor?

No, all apprentices must be in paid employment on a PAYE basis and have deductions made for tax and national insurance if applicable.

Does that mean they have a contract and get holiday pay etc.?

Yes, funding conditions require all apprentices to have a job description detailing what they will be expected to do as well as the skills they will acquire whilst at work. They must also be given a contract of employment detailing all of the statutory employment requirements, for example all statutory holidays that all other permanent employees are entitled to. This is currently 20 days per year plus the 8 statutory bank holidays. For more information see www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights.

How many hours will they be expected to work?

If aged between 16 and 18 an apprentice must not work more than 40 hours per week, including college time, if applicable. If they are asked to work extra hours to complete a specific job that is ok, provided that it is a mutual agreement and it is not compulsory or on a regular basis. The apprentice will need to be paid for these extra hours or have time off in lieu. If over 18 then there are no restrictions an apprentices how many hours they work except for the working time directive, go to www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours for more information. It is also recommended that an apprentice works a minimum of 30 hours a week in order to have sufficient time to complete their apprenticeship. If an apprentice is employed for less than 30 hours, the duration of the apprenticeship will be extended. The employer and provider will agree with how much additional time will need to be added on, and the employer must continue to employ the apprentice for the whole duration.

Do they get paid for attending their day release at college?

Yes, apprentices must be paid for any college attendance or study time. If they need to go to college for one day a week and are at work for the other 4, they must be paid for all 5 days. There is also

some 'off the job' training time that they need to be paid for too, there is more detail under 20% Off the Job.

How long does an apprenticeship take?

This depends upon the apprenticeship being studied but will range from 12 months as a minimum, up to 48 months.

What can an apprentice expect from the apprenticeship?

They will be supported by the employer to ensure there are the right opportunities to gather the evidence required for the apprenticeship and to allow for development of skills. They will make sure there is appropriate supervision in the workplace and that there is a mentor who can provide support. This does not have to be the line manager or supervisor, just someone who can help with any issues or difficulties that might occur during the apprenticeship, and to provide general support; it might even be someone who has recently completed their own apprenticeship. The employer will also be responsible for health, safety and welfare and must provide any mandatory PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) that is relevant to the industry sector. Support is also provided by the training provider who will help with the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship and visit the workplace to carry out reviews and to check progress.

What is the 20% off the job training all about and can they do this at home?

All apprentices are entitled to paid time away from their work to enable them to train and learn, this is called 'Off the Job Training' and the government feel that at least 20% of the working time should be spent away from the job to undertake their studies. There are a range of activities that will contribute to this 20% such as, shadowing and observing other skilled and experienced employees to learn new skills; day release at college; time during the working day to gather evidence for their portfolio and time to work on assignments and course work. Some of these activities can be undertaken at home, however the apprentice must agree with their employer how and where they will achieve their off the job training. Additionally, attendance for any courses that are relevant to the job to support learning can be used against the 20%. The provider can support both the apprentice and employer to understand what can be used as evidence, and will have resources, such as an online portfolio, to make sure that this off the job training is recorded.

My daughter/son already has a job, can they use this for their apprenticeship?

In some circumstances yes. If they work for an employer who is willing to take them on full time and allow them to study towards an apprenticeship, and it is relevant to the apprenticeship they want to study, then they can. If, however, they have a job working in a supermarket on the till but want to do a Digital Marketing apprenticeship then unfortunately this is not possible. This is because the job role must support the occupational apprenticeship and ensure that there are the correct opportunities for the young person to learn and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for that particular occupation. There may need to be a reduction in the duration of the apprenticeship to allow for any prior experience of the things that you already know, and therefore do not need to be taught or trained to do. This will be carried out as a skills scan.

What is the benefit of an apprenticeship?

As an apprentice you will be contributing to the success of the organisation you work for and at the end you will have gained a range of new knowledge, skills and behaviours to help you in your chosen

career. In many cases you will have achieved a recognised qualification and completed an apprenticeship which will support you in any future work applications. At the same time you will have been earning a wage and developing other employability skills to support further progression.

Here are some of the benefits:

Apprentices enjoy marked salary increases when they complete their training, and those with an Advanced Apprenticeship earn around £117,000 more than those without over the course of their career. (Parenta Online)

85% of apprentices will stay in employment, with two-thirds (64%) remaining with the same employer (Reed Online)

one in three (32%) of all former apprentices received a promotion within a year of completing their apprenticeship, whilst three-quarters (75%) stated that they were given more responsibility in their role. (Reed Online)

9 in 10 (87%) apprentices 'strongly agree' that they feel more confident in their own abilities as a result of undertaking their apprenticeship. (Reed Online).

If my son or daughter is working, who does the training or teaching for the apprenticeship?

The employer will appoint a training provider to support the apprenticeship. Some of the training will be done by the provider and some will be the responsibility of your employer. When searching for jobs using the Government online service, the advertisement will tell you who the apprenticeship provider will be. The Training Provider could be the local college or a private company who is there to support achievement of the final apprenticeship; however in some circumstances the employer may also be the training provider. They work with both the apprentice and employer to ensure that all available opportunities are provided to gather the evidence required to complete the apprenticeship successfully. They will take care of all the mandatory paperwork and visit the employer's premises to ensure that they are providing a working environment that meets Health and Safety legislation. They will conduct regular reviews with to check on progress, put action plans or targets in place as required, address any learning needs that may arise, and provide mentoring support for the duration of the apprenticeship. They will put in place a training plan, including any mandatory qualifications, and provide the underpinning knowledge and skills required to complete the apprenticeship. They will meet with all parties to make the decision about when readiness for End Point Assessment and provide information and feedback on progress and performance to date to ensure that everyone agrees that they are ready.

What is End Point Assessment?

End Point Assessment, or EPA, is the final stage of the apprenticeship. It is conducted by an independent assessment organisation who will take undertake certain assessments to ensure that the required knowledge has been retained and that the correct skills and behaviours are displayed as required for the job. This usually includes two or more of the following:

- multiple choice test
- a skills based task
- an interview or discussion
- a portfolio of evidence

The decision to go through to EPA, referred to as the Gateway, and is usually made approximately 3 months before the end of the apprenticeship to allow enough time to prepare for the process which the provider will support.

If they get their qualification, why do they need to do the EPA?

It is essential that the EPA is completed, even if any mandatory qualifications that are required have been achieved. This is because the apprenticeship is not awarded if the EPA is not completed. Also, if there is no mandatory qualification provided within the apprenticeship, the final apprenticeship certificate is proof that the required knowledge, skills and behaviours that are associated occupational role have been achieved. If there is a mandatory qualification as part of the apprenticeship standard, it is likely to be a knowledge only qualification and therefore will not provide evidence that their skills and behaviours are also at the correct level for the chosen career. You can ask the apprenticeship provider to explain what is involved in the EPA for the standard that is being studied towards.