

Taking on a Youthforce Apprentice

Do employers get a choice in who they take on as an apprentice?

Yes – just as with any employee you take on, you are able to follow your usual selection procedures. If an employer has a candidate in mind, we usually ask to arrange a screening process to ensure the candidate meets the requirements for the apprenticeship training.

Youthforce also provides a recruitment service at no extra cost – through this, we advertise roles, select and pre-screen candidates, and provide a shortlist to employers. From the list, employers can select candidates for interviews or trial days, allowing you to find the best fit.

Do candidates need any qualifications before they can become an apprentice?

Apprentice candidates must not have restrictions on their right to work in the UK in order to receive ESFA apprenticeship funding. Further guidance on this can be provided on request.

There are no formal academic requirements in order to be accepted on to an apprenticeship. However, if an apprentice does not have a C or higher in GCSE Math and English (or an equivalent such as Functional Skills level 2) they will be required to complete Functional Skills qualifications alongside their apprenticeship, which we provide. Part of our pre-screening involves testing candidates' maths and English abilities in order to ensure they are at a level of ability that will not prevent them from completing the apprenticeship. If a candidate falls significantly short in maths and English screening, this may prevent us from being able to train them.

What do employers need to have in place for apprentices?

Employers must ensure that they provide a suitable level of induction, training, support and mentorship to apprentices. Typically, this means assigning a current employee as a mentor who would be responsible for training the apprentice in the workplace, setting tasks, and providing general supervision. Mentors do not need to be at the apprentice's side throughout the day, but should be able to provide a reasonable level of consistent support and guidance throughout their employment. A more detailed pack on mentor responsibilities can be provided on request.

What is the procedure for onboarding an apprentice?

When an apprentice starts with an employer, a typical employer-employee relationship is initiated. This means that the employer must issue an employment contract and follow their own HR policies regarding induction, probation, training etc. Any pre-employment checks such as references and DBS checks must be carried out by the employer.

As the apprentice starts their position, they will also be required to complete an enrolment process, often referred to as a 'sign-up'. This is a meeting between the apprentice, the employer, and the Youthforce tutor. The purpose of the meeting is to officially enrol the apprentice onto their programme, outline the apprenticeship agreement, schedule tutor meetings, and complete

necessary paperwork. This meeting can last up to two hours, and requires the attendance of the apprentice's mentor, as well as someone within the organisation who can sign HR paperwork.

How long do apprenticeships last?

Apprenticeships vary in length depending on the programme. The minimum length is 12 months.

How much does it cost an employer to take on an apprentice?

Apprenticeship training costs vary widely depending on the programme in question. As an illustration, a level 3 Specialist Support of Teaching and Learning in Schools apprenticeship costs £2500 over a 12 month period. A level 3 Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship costs £21,000 over 18 months.

Training costs are drawn from an employer's levy pot and are paid in instalments, with 20% of the fee held back until the final month, as a 'completion payment'. The other 80% is divided equally by the number of months that a course lasts.

If an employer overspends on their levy allowance or does not pay the levy, training costs may be payable through a co-investment plan. This requires the employer to pay 10% of the training costs, with the remaining 90% subsidised by the government. This is determined on a case by case basis, and we are happy to arrange discussions to explain this in greater depth.

How much do employers need to pay apprentices?

Apprentice minimum wage is £3.50 per hour. Over the course of the apprenticeship, apprentices must work (on average) 30 paid hours per week, for 52 weeks of the year, pro-rata.

In the London area, we would advise employers to offer National Minimum Wage (or higher); this is a common trend, and is more likely to attract suitable candidates.

What happens when an apprenticeship ends?

When an apprentice finishes, employers may choose to progress the apprentice on to a higher level (if available), or take on the apprentice as a regular employee. If the employer does not choose to keep the apprentice, they are expected to provide some support in finding future employment. This could be in the form of career advice, an exit interview,

No recruitment fees are payable for employers who decide to keep on an apprentice as a regular employee.

How is training delivered through an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are designed to develop skills through on and off-the-job learning. During their time as an employee, apprentices should have the opportunity to develop skills relevant to the position they hold, under the guidance and supervision of a mentor within the company. As a training provider, Youthforce assigns a tutor to each apprentice. Tutors assign coursework to be completed as 'off-the-job' learning. Approximately once every six weeks, tutors arrange meetings (usually on

site at the place of employment) to complete reviews, assessments and generally check on how the apprentice is getting on. Apprentices are required to spend 20% of their time completing off-the-job learning. For more information about 20% off-the-job learning time, please read the [guidelines provided by the Department for Education](#).

What happens if things don't work out with an apprentice?

We endeavour to ensure that apprentices receive a high standard of support both from employers and Youthforce tutors. In cases where apprentices are struggling, we feel it is important to ensure that adequate support is provided from all sides, in order to allow for improvements in performance.

Ultimately, apprentices are employees of an organisation, and are subject to the usual policies of the workplace. This means that in rare cases where standards and expectations are not met, the employer may pursue the disciplinary procedures of the workplace, including termination where necessary.