

Employer Guide to Apprenticeships

What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships benefit employers and individuals by boosting skills and improving productivity. An apprenticeship is a job with training. It is a way for existing or new employees to learn and gain valuable skills, knowledge and behaviours while they work.

Apprenticeships are available across 170 industries. Businesses of all sizes and sectors can offer an apprenticeship through Fareport and they normally last anything from 12 months to 2 years.

How do they work?

Fareport Training will work closely with your organisation to ensure that the apprenticeship offered is the most appropriate for the individual's job role, whilst reflecting the needs of the business and those of the learner. Most of the training is in the workplace, working with your dedicated Trainer to learn job specific skills, knowledge and behaviours. These are taught using training sessions, workbooks, observations, feedback and projects. Training outside of the workplace will depend on the occupational area, the requirements of the learner and the wishes of the employer. This can include classroom training, online learning, distance learning and learner research and projects. On completion of the apprenticeship the apprentice must perform tasks confidently and completely to the standard set by the industry. Each apprenticeship includes an 'end-point assessment' to test their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Who are they for?

Anyone over 16 who is not in full time education can apply for an apprenticeship. Employers can offer apprenticeships to new entrants or use them to grow talent from among current employees. The focus of an apprenticeship is to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge required for their specific job role, future roles and progression opportunities in the industry.

The benefits of using Apprenticeships

Offering apprenticeships or hiring new apprentices is a productive and effective way for businesses to grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. 83% of employers would recommend

apprenticeships to others. Apprenticeships increase business productivity, which leads to increased profits, lower prices and better products. Other benefits of apprenticeships are increasing employee satisfaction, reducing staff turnover and reducing recruitment costs through clear succession planning. Learners state that they come away with a sense of achievement, improved confidence and new soft skills such as time management and self awareness.



Employer responsibilities

By employing an apprentice, employers have certain requirements to meet. Employers must give their apprentice an induction into their role and provide on-the-job training. Employers are responsible for paying their apprentice's wages and issuing their contract of employment. There must be an Apprenticeship Agreement between the employer, apprentice and training provider - Fareport Training can provide a template for this.

A new or young apprentice must receive at least the Apprenticeship National Minimum Wage. Apprentices aged 16-18, or in the first year of their apprenticeship, must be paid a minimum of £5.28 per hour (2023/24). Many businesses pay more, and we always recommend that you pay them your normal rate for the job. The minimum hours of employment for an apprentice should normally be at least 30 hours per week. By exception, where the individual's circumstances or nature of employment makes this impossible, then an absolute minimum of 16 hours must be met. In such cases the duration of the apprenticeship will be extended. All apprentices must receive the same benefits as other employees.

Requirement for Off the Job Training

Anyone undertaking an apprenticeship must be given time during their paid working hours to dedicate to off the job training at their usual place of work, or offsite. All apprentices must receive a minimum of 6 hours per week for those working 30 hours (equivalent of 20%). The minimum may not be sufficient but will all be discussed at the planning stage.

This means training that is directly related to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard. It can include Fareport training sessions, workbooks, online learning, as well as employer led training, mentoring, job shadowing and projects. Fareport will work with you to plan how the off the job training and document this in your Training Agreement.

What does an Apprenticeship Cost?

If you are a levy paying employer, the total cost can be paid from your online Apprenticeship Service Account. The levy was introduced on 6 April 2017 and is charged at a rate of 0.5% of an employers' pay bill, paid through PAYE on a monthly basis. Each employer has a levy allowance of £15,000. Only employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million are liable to pay the levy.

Employers with a pay bill of less than £3 million a year do not pay the levy. 95% of their apprenticeship training costs will be paid by the government, with the remaining 5% paid by the employer, directly to their training provider. Depending on the apprenticeship you will pay as little as £150 and a maximum of £450 for some high-level apprenticeships. (The only exception is for those with fewer than 50 employees who are training a 16-18-year-old where the government will cover 100% of the training cost).

Additional Benefits

Employers are not required to pay National Insurance Contributions for apprentices under the age of 25.

The following incentives are also available to employers who take on apprentices:

- £1,000 payment to both the employer and provider when they train a 16-18-year-old.
- £1,000 payment to both the employer and provider when they train a 19-24-year-old who has previously been in care or who has a Local Authority Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Employers with fewer than 50 people working for them will be able to train 16-18-year-old apprentices without contributing to the costs of training. The government pays 100% of the training costs for these individuals.

Working with Fareport Training

When we start a partnership with a new employer, we take the time to understand your business, values and the skills needs of your company. We provide free advice on getting started with apprenticeships and will conduct an in-depth Business Needs Analysis to identify the right programmes for you. We will help you to select eligible employees from your current staff or to recruit new staff for free.

Once an apprentice is enrolled your Fareport Trainer will meet them at least every 4 to 6 weeks or more frequently depending on the apprentice's needs, for example if they have additional learning needs or need to complete any mandatory functional skills (Maths and English) as identified in our comprehensive initial assessment of each learner. Our Trainers are available in between visits by phone, email and MS Teams to help employers and learners. Learners will also engage with their trainer using their online portfolio of work.

A successful apprenticeship depends on the learner completing the guided learning agreed with their trainer and the support given by their manager and any workplace mentor. We always try to fully involve the line manager giving them full access to the online portfolio. We find that manager support is crucial to successful completion. We also carry out 3-way reviews every 3 months. Each apprentice will receive an Apprenticeship Learning Guide which will help with all aspects of their study. If you would like to see a copy, please ask your apprentice or alternatively their Trainer.



Safeguarding Apprentices

We have a duty of care to safeguard young apprentices aged 16-18 on our programmes by ensuring they work in a safe environment conducive to learning. At Fareport we take this requirement very seriously and extend it to any apprentice, irrespective of age, who is vulnerable in any way. We cover safe working throughout the apprenticeship and learners will cover a range of topics including Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, British values and the importance of tolerance and respect in the workplace. All apprentices on Fareport programmes have access to a confidential safeguarding contact via Safeguarding@fareport.co.uk

Additionally, we offer a free and impartial Helpline to both employers and apprentices on all aspects of employment law and responsibilities at helpline@vlexible-hr.com. If you have any questions or concerns about an apprentice or their training, please contact us.