

BEING APPRENTICE READY

A CHECKLIST FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

INTRODUCTION

This set of checklists has been developed to help training providers to further consider, develop and promote the support offer available to apprentices.

There are a range of challenges and / or support needs an apprentice may have. As apprentices work, they may require different types of support to other non-work based students. Ensuring that support is made available to apprentices is a shared responsibility between the employer and the training provider. Working together you should be able to offer support to apprentices across a range of areas including:

- Pastoral, health & wellbeing support
- Financial support
- Learning & development support
- Careers & employment support

The way that this support is promoted is important, to make sure that apprentices know that the support offer also applies to them. Apprentices have different schedules to other students, they might not visit the provider regularly - or at all - and so accessible support and information could require more consideration than for other students.

Support offers should be made clear to apprentices at their induction and revisited throughout the duration of the apprenticeship. The promotion of the support offer may include materials and resources on websites, e-learning platforms and handbooks. Induction and review processes can be used to confirm or signpost to the support available.

USING THE CHECKLISTS

The checklists are designed as a prompt to help training providers staff and teams to undertake a review of the policies, processes and information available for apprentices and their employers across four main support areas.

Consider using them, with your apprentice population in mind, to take a critical look at the

- Suitability of resources - think about whether the language, style and content are suitable for someone in work and how you will if required, engage with employers on the areas of support.
- Location of resources – You will have a range of resources and documents where your support offer is described such as apprentice facing handbooks and induction packs. You will also describe aspects of your support offer within the commitment statement and where relevant in your employer facing materials. Think about where and when you are describing your support offer and if this is accessible and appropriate for apprentices and their employers?

The checklist is grouped into four areas of support. These also feature in a resource specifically for apprentices 'A guide to support available to apprentices'. You might want to consider how this sits alongside your own materials and resources and how you promote and share this.

If changes are made to your resources or where they are located as a result of this exercise, ensure that key staff, apprentices and employers are made aware.

Identifying an issue or potential challenge and offering appropriate support may well just make the difference between a demotivated, disengaged apprentice at risk of withdrawing, and a motivated, happy and successful apprenticeship achiever.

PASTORAL, HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT

Apprentices can present with a range of support needs and it is important that they are aware of the available support and flexibilities of their apprenticeship at induction and early in their programme. Many worries or issues can be resolved or reduced if discussed early with training provider staff or their line manager/mentor in the workplace. However, training providers need resources in place if issues are not resolved early or require further intervention. Support needs can include physical health problems or disabilities requiring on or off-the-job adjustments, mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression which can be exacerbated when combining study, work and home responsibilities.

Areas of support an apprentice may require	Do we have information / support available for apprentices?	Is the language & content suitable for someone in work?	Are resources accessible & promoted to our apprentices?	Are apprentices successfully using resources available?	Comments for action / further work
Opportunities to informally discuss any issues of concern before they become urgent					
Personal issues or emergencies e.g. housing, family					
Managing illness / ill health					
Safeguarding concerns					
Mental health needs					
Care leaver support / bursary access					
Confidence issues impacting testing / assessment / EPA					

Useful links: [Access to Work](#) [Mental Health Support Service for Apprentices](#), funded by DWP.

Resources to raise awareness of the funding available to help employers and training providers to better support care leavers on apprenticeships as well as the bursary for care leavers choosing to do an apprenticeship <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/care-leaver-resources/>

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Apprentices may lack confidence with the study or academic component of the apprenticeship programme, particularly if they've been out of education for some time. They may therefore need support or a flexible approach to meet the demands of their programme, and balance these with their other responsibilities. Early discussion and intervention ahead of falling behind with targets is always preferable. If an apprentice has a learning difficulty or disability (LDD), this should be assessed, and support given to help the individual to complete their programme.

Areas of support an apprentice may require	Do we have information / support available for apprentices?	Is the language & content suitable for someone in work?	Are resources accessible & promoted to our apprentices?	Are apprentices successfully using resources available?	Comments for action / further work
Opportunities to informally discuss and resolve any issue of concern					
LDD / learning support needs – on-the-job learning					
LDD / learning support needs – off-the-job learning					
LDD / learning support needs – English & maths					
Study support needs – developing the academic skills to research and learn					
Lack of progress – falling behind with milestones and targets					

Useful links: Funding is available to providers to support Apprentices who require Learning Support or Exceptional Learning Support. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>

Guidance on End Point Assessment – Reasonable Adjustments <https://www.instituteofapprenticeships.org/quality/end-point-assessment-reasonable-adjustments-guidance/>

FINANCIAL

Apprentices, like other students, have financial challenges to deal with in life and some require support, advice or skills building even when they're in employment and earning. Starting a new apprenticeship may impact on financial commitments, budgets and benefits so good preparation and support may be able to minimise the impact.

Areas of support an apprentice may require	Do we have information / support available for apprentices?	Is the language & content suitable for someone in work?	Are resources accessible & promoted to our apprentices?	Are apprentices successfully using resources available?	Comments for action / further work
Low income issues e.g. travel costs, work clothing, budgeting					
Benefits and pay eligibility, including concerns about being underpaid, access to childcare					
Student discounts available, e.g. NUS apprentice card					
At risk of redundancy, or made redundant					

Useful links: Student discounts available, e.g. NUS apprentice card - <https://www.apprenticeextra.co.uk>

There are charities like [Dress for Success](#) (for women) and [Suited and Booted](#) (for men) that offer free work clothes and advice.

Apprentices may continue to qualify for [Universal Credit or Tax Credits](#) and / or [help towards childcare costs](#) provided by the government. Visit the GOV.UK website to find out how they can check their eligibility.

[Help and advice](#) for workers and employers on rights and obligations at work -

Apprentices that are made redundant may be able to complete their apprenticeship if they meet certain criteria. Eligibility is detailed in the [Funding rules](#).

CAREERS & EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) should be up front, prior to starting an apprenticeship and then embedded throughout the apprentice journey. This could be delivered by the provider only or in partnership with the employer. This guide to choosing the right apprenticeship will help employers and providers make the right choices for them and their apprentices.

An apprenticeship is a real job and apprentices must be employed from day one. Employment legislation and working conditions often cause confusion or anxiety for apprentices. They may be new to the job market or concerned about job security with the employer. Apprentices should be able to turn to their provider for support or advice when they are unsure or unhappy so that the options can be explored. These could include negotiating part-time working, instigating a break in learning or changing employer or programme.

Areas of support an apprentice may require	Do we have information / support available for apprentices?	Is the language & content suitable for someone in work?	Are resources accessible & promoted to our apprentices?	Are apprentices successfully using resources available?	Comments for action / further work
Pre-programme – on the right programme					
On programme – check opportunities in place					
End of programme – progression opportunities / employability support					
Support with 'Access to Work' for new or existing disability/health condition					
Unhappy in job role or industry choice					
Employment issues – pay, working hours, access to PPE					

Useful links: Support with [Access to Work](#) for new or existing disability or health condition

[ACAS](#) (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) is an independent body who provides free advice on employment rights, rules and how to raise and resolve problems at work. The [National Careers Service](#) provides information, advice and guidance to make decisions on learning, training and work.