Apprenticeships
Who are they for and how can they be used?

Facts for managers

Apprenticeships are a tailored and effective way to grow talent from within. It’s good to understand what options are available and how these can benefit you and your team. Here, we tackle some of the misconceptions and frequently asked questions posed by managers in relation to apprenticeships:

What is the age for an apprenticeship?
Apprenticeships are for people of all ages who want to participate in structured learning to develop their skills and progress their career. There is no upper age limit, although apprentices must be over the age of 16 to start a programme.

Are apprenticeships just for new recruits?
Apprenticeships are a great way to support a new colleague coming into your organisation but they can also be used to support existing colleagues with their skills development, for example if they are looking to progress or perhaps reskill following a career change. The most important thing to remember is an apprenticeship is about learning new skills - if they are already well qualified or experienced in their role, then an alternative development route may be better for them.

What apprenticeships are available?
There are now over 300 apprenticeship standards available and many of these are in professional occupations ranging from IT to Project Management to Leadership and Management. The apprenticeship will ensure your colleague learns the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to be competent in their role, so you will need to select the right apprenticeship and your training provider will be able to help with this.
Are apprenticeships just for full time employees?

No, as long as an employee works for a minimum of 16 hours per week they can undertake an apprenticeship. However, the duration of the apprenticeship will need to extend to take into account the learning required.

Will the apprentice require much time away from their role?

Apprenticeships are work-based qualifications designed to support the apprentice in becoming competent in their role. The apprentice must put their learning into practice and will therefore need to be in the workplace to evidence this.

However, 20% of their working hours must be spent developing and learning away from their day to day role. This doesn’t necessarily mean one day a week away from their workplace. It means giving them time to study outside of their day to day usual working activities. Your training provider will help map this into your programme taking into account your business requirements when you first meet.

How are apprenticeships paid for?

If you are a large employer your organisation will pay a monthly tax (known as the apprenticeship levy), which can be reclaimed for developing apprentices in England. Regional variations apply in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and your training provider will be able to explain the differences.

What benefits will apprentices bring to my team?

There are many proven benefits for organisations who offer apprenticeships. Apprentices tend to be more highly engaged, stronger performers and more likely to stay with your organisation. They are also highly skilled to professional and industry standards. Better equipped and motivated colleagues will support you in delivering services and products to customers and achieving your goals.

How can I use apprenticeships?

Considering the benefits they bring, apprenticeships can be used in a variety of scenarios; whether you are looking to fill a skills or capability gap in your organisation, prepare for workforce changes e.g. a retiring population, or address issues such as high attrition or problem recruitment areas.

What role do I need to play in the apprenticeship? Will it take a lot of my time?

As a line manager, your role in supporting your apprentice is essential to help them stay on track and motivated. You will be asked to input to the apprentice’s journey at the start and agree the milestones to help them achieve the apprenticeship. Support for the apprentice would be as per your usual performance management and development approach, e.g. standard good practice one to one reviews.

Why should I offer an apprenticeship to a colleague?

There are many proven benefits for individuals undertaking an apprenticeship. They get to participate in a structured learning programme that leads to an industry recognised qualification. They also receive full support from a dedicated coach and access to a range of resources. Apprentices can use the transferable skills they have developed to progress in their role and future career.

More information

If you would like more detailed information on apprenticeships, please register your interest with your Departmental Apprenticeship Lead, who will provide further advice and guidance on the programmes and the application process.

Alternatively email: publicsectorapprenticeships@knowledgepool.com