



UK Government

Foundation Apprenticeships

Training Provider Toolkit

August 2026

Introduction

Training providers are essential to the delivery of foundation apprenticeships, a new programme designed to bridge the gap between education and employment for young people.

This toolkit provides information and resources needed to engage employers effectively, including programme overviews, benefit summaries, factsheets, customisable social media assets, and presentations.

Relationships with employers are central to the success of this programme. By highlighting progression pathways and demonstrating value to businesses and young people, training providers can position foundation apprenticeships as a compelling solution for entry-level talent development.

The resource will expand over time, incorporating new content, case studies, and additional digital assets as the foundation apprenticeship programme develops and matures.

Contents

[About foundation apprenticeships](#)

[Benefits](#)

[Funding](#)

[Promoting foundation apprenticeships](#)

[Foundation apprenticeship details and progression journey](#)

[Assets and social media](#)

[Share your experience](#)

Use the links above to navigate the toolkit. Click on  to come back to the contents page.

About foundation apprenticeships



What are foundation apprenticeships?

- **Entry-level, paid jobs** with structured training designed for young people aged 16 to 21, and 22 to 24 year olds who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, are a care leaver, or are in or leaving prison. No prior qualifications or experience are required.
- **Level 2 apprenticeships** combining on-the-job experience with off-the-job learning across six sectors: construction and the built environment, engineering and manufacturing, health and social care, digital, catering and hospitality, and retail service, supply and administration, covering a broad occupational area rather than a single job role.
- **Typical duration of 8 months** with a minimum 187 hours off-the-job learning. On completion, apprentices will be competent in the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the occupational standard.
- **A starting point for young people** new to the workforce, offering broad sector knowledge and workplace experience to explore career paths within a sector, develop technical knowledge and employability skills, and progress onto more specific or higher-level apprenticeships.
- **Foundation apprenticeships** give employers the opportunity to attract and develop young talent tailored to business needs, address skills gaps, and build a long-term talent pipeline.
- **Employers can access up to £2,000** to help cover the extra costs for hiring a foundation apprentice. Additional funding is also available, depending on eligibility.



Foundation apprenticeship requirements

What are the age requirements?

Any young person aged 16 to 21 can start a foundation apprenticeship.

Those aged between 22 to 24 can start one if they:

- have an EHC plan
- are in care or have been in care
- are in prison or leaving prison

You cannot apply for a foundation apprenticeship if you are 25 or over.

What are the English and maths requirements?

- Apprentices aged 16 to 18 must work towards Level 1 or Level 2 (if not already achieved), but don't need to pass the assessment to complete the apprenticeship.
- Apprentices aged 19+ are not required to study English and maths Level 1 or Level 2 unless their employer requires it, or they choose to improve their skills.

How to apply?

Adverts for foundation apprenticeships in England are available on [Find an apprenticeship](#) in the following sectors:

- Construction and the built environment
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Health and social care
- Digital
- Catering and hospitality
- Retail service, supply and administration



**HEALTH AND
SOCIAL CARE**



**CATERING AND
HOSPITALITY**



**RETAIL SERVICE, SUPPLY
AND ADMINISTRATION**



**DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY**



**CONSTRUCTION AND
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**



**ENGINEERING AND
MANUFACTURING**



How are foundation apprenticeships different from other apprenticeships?

- Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships suit many young people, but for some they can feel like a big step. Foundation apprenticeships offer an accessible entry level point, opening opportunities to those who might not have been able to start an apprenticeship before.
- They deliver employability skills and behaviours, such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience, to support the transition from education to employment, leading to meaningful and rewarding careers.
- They are broader in context and complement existing apprenticeships, enabling accelerated progression onto more specific apprenticeships at the same or higher-level.
- No prior qualifications or experience are necessary, and they have a typical duration of at least 8 months.



Benefits



How can foundation apprenticeships benefit training providers?

- **Broaden apprenticeship offer:** deliver a new entry-level apprenticeship programme aligned with government priorities, supporting more young people into paid work.
- **Create a natural pipeline:** support young people from entry-level through to higher-level apprenticeships generating repeat starts across progression levels, improving retention, and strengthening long-term outcomes.
- **Improve outcomes:** well-supported foundation apprentices are better prepared for progression, leading to stronger completion rates and positive employment destinations.
- **Build long-term relationships:** training providers can use foundation apprenticeships as an entry point to ongoing workforce development partnerships, creating repeat apprenticeship opportunities across different levels.
- **Income generation:** retaining apprentices across multiple programme levels increases starts and generates sustained long-term revenue.
- **Additional payments:** receive £1,000 per eligible apprentice aged 16 to 18, or those aged 19 to 24 with an EHC plan or are a care leaver.



How can foundation apprenticeships benefit employers?



- **Build a strong talent pipeline:** foundation apprenticeships help employers attract and develop young people through early career opportunities, increasing loyalty, motivation, and long-term retention.
- **Build a future-ready workforce:** investing in the programme helps employers develop young people with the specific knowledge and employability skills their business needs from day one, boosting productivity and supporting long-term growth.
- **Shape and attract talent:** employers can tailor training to their specific business needs and embed company values and culture from the start. Foundation apprenticeships provide access to a broader talent pool, introducing young people who can bring fresh ideas, help address skills shortages, and increase workforce diversity.
- **Talent development:** foundation apprentices develop employability skills, including communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience. This supports progression into more specialised roles, reduces recruitment costs, and improves long-term staff retention.
- **Funding support available:** employers can access up to £8,000 to help cover the extra costs for hiring a foundation apprentice. Additional funding is also available, depending on eligibility.

How can foundation apprenticeships benefit young people?

- **Earn while they learn:** foundation apprenticeships are paid jobs with structured training, enabling young people to earn a wage whilst developing the technical knowledge and skills to succeed in the workplace.
- **Explore their options:** they give young people the opportunity to develop a broad understanding of different roles within a sector, before committing to a more specific or advanced occupation.
- **Launch their career:** foundation apprenticeships provide young people with the opportunity to begin a successful career leading to progression onto more specific or higher-level apprenticeships. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may also reduce the duration of their next apprenticeship.
- **Build employability skills:** young people will develop skills and behaviours in communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience needed to thrive in the workplace whilst gaining hands-on training to support their transition from education into employment.
- **Supportive environment:** designed for young people who are at the very start of their career, with employers and training providers who are invested in their growth. Support can be provided for English and maths, if not already achieved.
- **Future earnings potential:** at each apprenticeship level, earnings for apprenticeships one year after study are higher than earnings for the equivalent level of FE and other skills courses.



Funding



Funding for foundation apprenticeships – levy and non-levy businesses

Foundation apprenticeship training and assessment costs will be 100% fully funded for both levy and non-levy employers for eligible apprentices under 25.

Levy-paying employers will be exempt from paying the 25% co-investment rate once their levy funds are exhausted.

This removes barriers for all employers hiring young talent and ensures apprenticeship training is fully funded for every employer, large and small.



Financial payments available for employers

Payment		Employer type	Age eligibility	Schedule
£1,000	Additional payment for hiring apprentices	All employers	16 to 18 (and under 25 with an EHC plan or care leavers)	Paid in two equal instalments, at day 90 and one year after the apprenticeship started (or day 242 if the apprenticeship is under 12 months). Claimed by the training provider and passed on to the employer.
£2,000	Foundation apprenticeship incentive	All employers	16 to 21 (and under 25 with an EHC plan, care leavers, or prisoners and prison leavers)	Paid in three equal instalments, at day 90, day 242 (8 months) and the final payment when an apprentice progresses onto their next apprenticeship. Claimed by the training provider and passed on to the employer.
£2,000	Apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy Employers (from 1 October 2026)	Non-levy employers only	16 to 24 (new employees)	Paid in two equal instalments at day 90 and day 365 (or day 242 if the apprenticeship is under 12 months). Earliest payment from January 2027. Claimed by the training provider and passed on to the employer.
£3,000	Youth Jobs Grant	All employers	18 to 24, if apprentice has been unemployed and on universal credit for six months or more	Paid in two instalments, £1,800 after 6 weeks and £1,200 after 18 weeks. Paid directly to employers by the Department for Work and Pensions. Details available on GOV.UK .



Employers can claim more than one of these payments. For further information on apprenticeship funding rules and eligibility, visit [Apprenticeship funding rules](#).

Additional financial benefits for employers and young people

Employers:

- 100% training costs covered for new starts under 25
- No employer National Insurance contributions for apprentices under 25 (see HRMC guidance for details)

Young people:

- £3,000 bursary available to care leavers and young people in care under 25 starting an apprenticeship
- Developing new £4,500 bursary, targeted for households in receipt of Universal Credit



Promoting foundation apprenticeships



Building your foundation apprenticeships offer

Understanding foundation apprenticeships and opportunities

- Explore the relevant standards on the [Skills England website](#) to show how foundation apprenticeships can fit within the delivery offer.
- Map progression routes for each standard using the [Skills England website](#). Each standard indicates how apprentices can progress from a foundation apprenticeship onto more specific apprenticeships at the same or higher-level.
- Apply Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to help reduce the duration and cost of future apprenticeships, making progression more attractive to employers.

Employer engagement strategy and growth

- Position foundation apprenticeships as part of a broader skills portfolio to attract new employers and enhance relationships with existing ones.
- Promote proactively to current employer partners and update all marketing channels to reach new audiences.
- Ensure the 'Find an Apprenticeship Training Provider' profile is updated to reflect the foundation apprenticeship offer.
- Reach potential apprentices by engaging with local schools, colleges, charities, and community organisations that support young people who could benefit from a foundation apprenticeship.

Building referral pathways to reach potential apprentices

- Build strategic partnerships with organisations supporting care leavers, young offenders, and those with an EHC plan, all priority eligible groups.
- Highlight the care leavers bursary and other financial support to demonstrate the accessibility and value of foundation apprenticeships to both young people and employers.



Delivering foundation apprenticeships effectively

Tailor onboarding and support

- Tailor the onboarding and induction process to develop each foundation apprentice's technical knowledge and employability skills from day one.
- Develop targeted resources to support employability skills development, including communication, teamwork, resilience, and problem-solving, to build workplace confidence.
- Provide pastoral support and mentoring as needed, helping apprentices navigate workplace expectations and their learning journey.

Working with assessment organisations

- Engage early with assessment organisations to fully understand the assessment requirements and expected outcomes to support successful completion.
- Build strong relationships with assessment organisations to ensure delivery aligns with their expectations and to clarify how foundation apprenticeships differ from other levels.

Build long-term relationships for growth

- Foundation apprenticeships offer training providers the opportunity to develop sustained employer relationships, building a reputation as a trusted partner in long-term workforce development.
- Demonstrate progression pathways from foundation to higher-level apprenticeships, showing how you can support employers in developing talent over time.
- Focus on retention and growth, helping employers see the value of investing in apprentices from entry-level through to advanced roles, reinforcing the position as their training provider of choice.

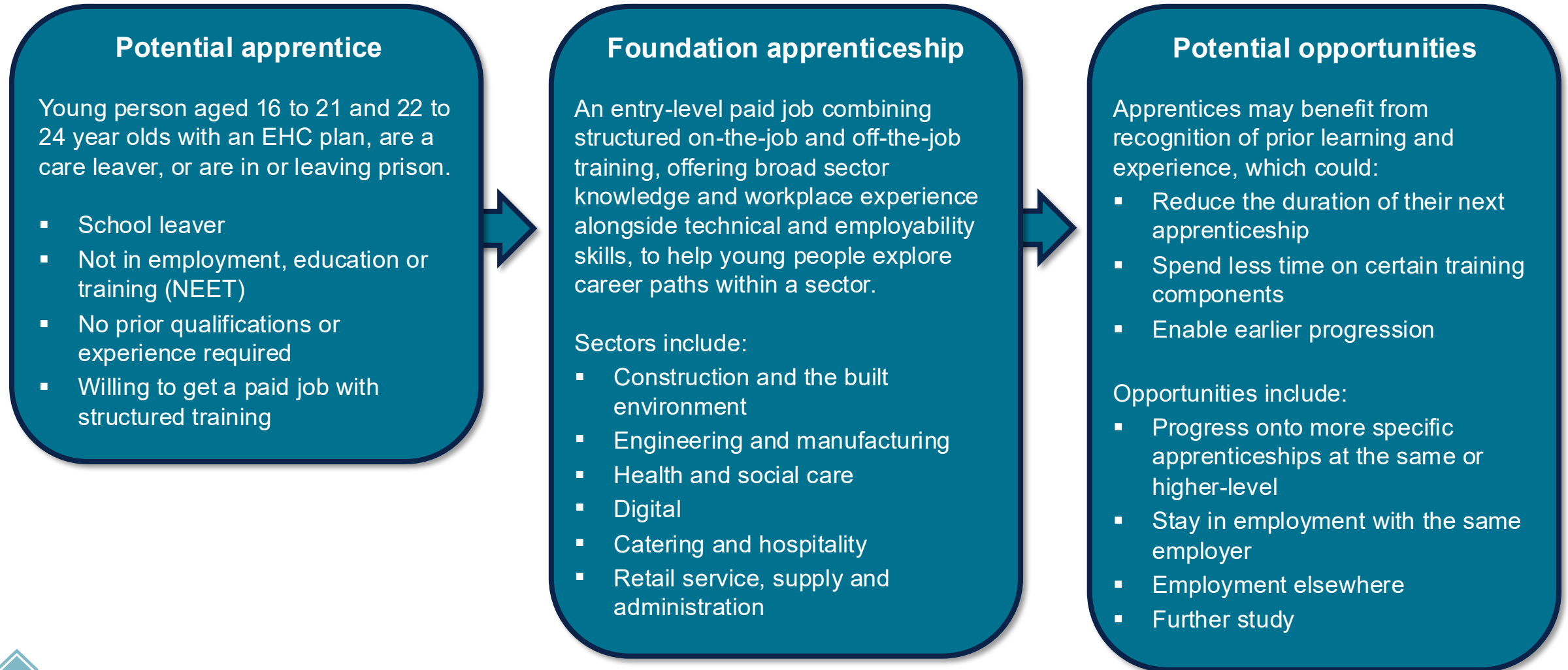


Foundation apprenticeship details and progression journey



Progression journey overview

Training providers should work with employers to map out clear progression pathways from foundation apprenticeships onto more specific apprenticeships at the same or higher-level, creating a talent pipeline that benefits both the apprentice's career development and the employer's long-term workforce needs.



Building service engineering foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To provide apprentices with skills in maintaining and operating building service systems such as low carbon heating, refrigeration, air conditioning, heat pumps, and plumbing in domestic, industrial, and commercial buildings.

What they do:

- Plan and carry out maintenance on building systems
- Monitor and manage equipment using building and energy management systems
- Ensure buildings function efficiently and sustainably

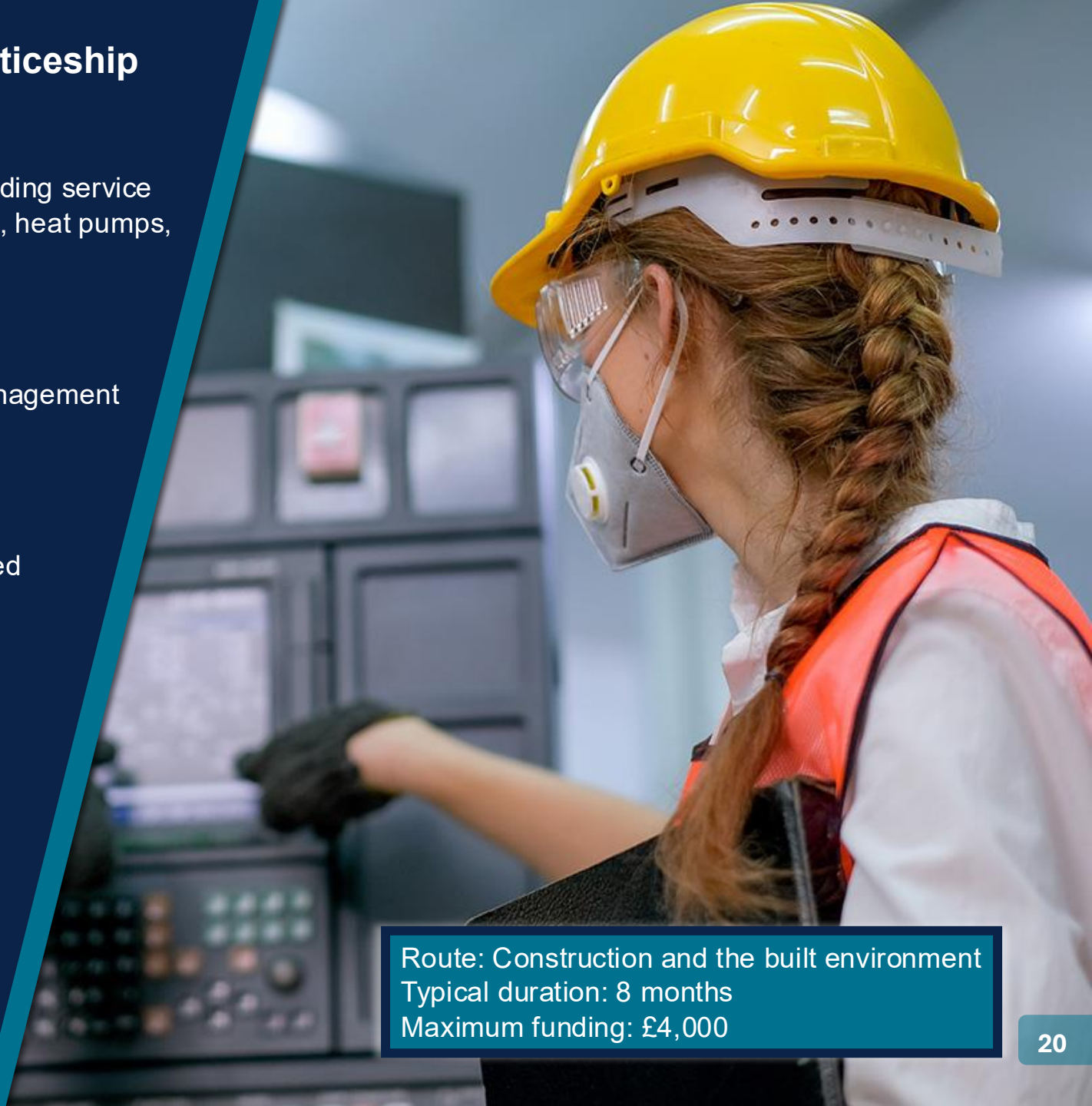
Daily duties:

- Roles vary depending on the building type and systems involved
- Work closely with team members and site managers

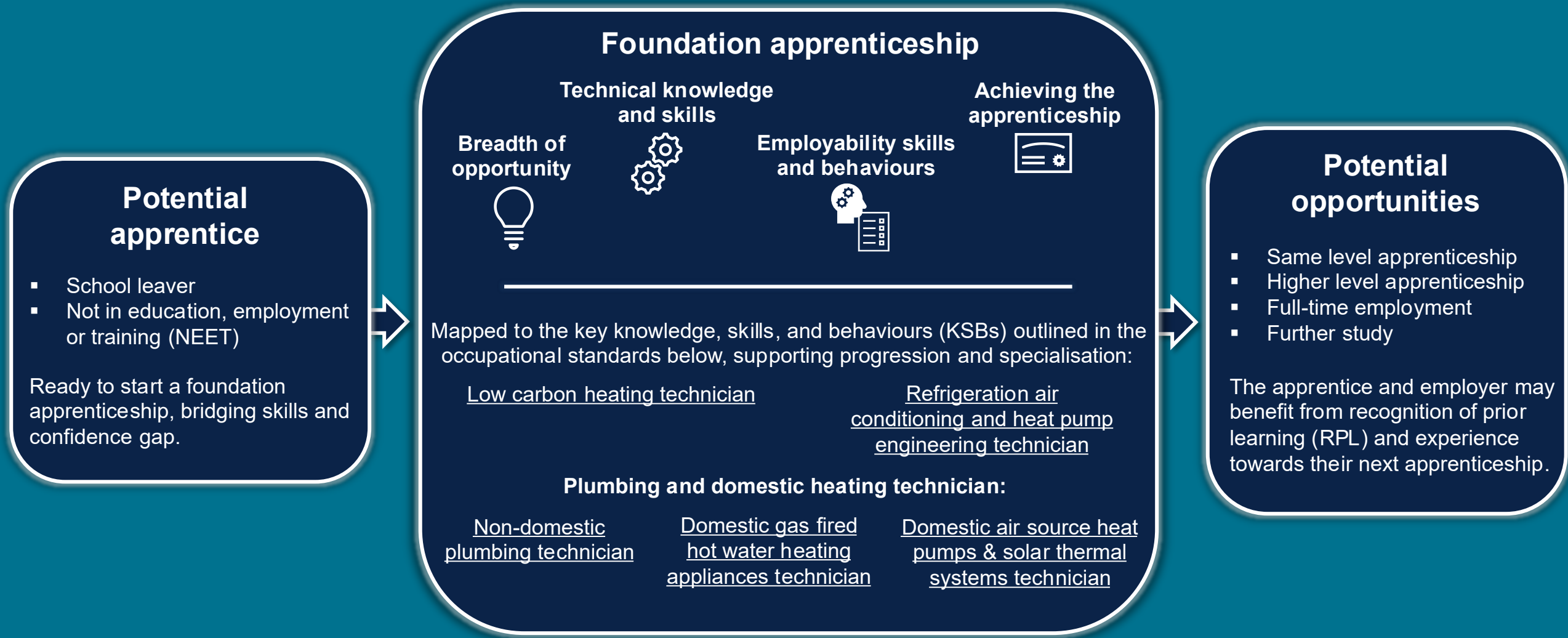
Included occupations:

- Low carbon heating technician
- Refrigeration air conditioning and heat pump engineering technician
- Plumbing and domestic heating technician

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Construction and the built environment
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £4,000



Finishing trades foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To provide apprentices with skills in painting and decorating, wall tiling, and floor laying, contributing to the final stages of construction projects.

What they do:

- Apply finishes to surfaces and install flooring and tiles
- Work on both new builds and refurbishments
- Support the construction team by working safely and efficiently

Daily duties:

- Roles vary depending on the trade and project size
- Interact with customers, other trades, and site management

Included occupations:

- Painter and decorator
- Wall and floor tiler
- Floorlayer

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.





Potential apprentice

- School leaver
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Ready to start a foundation apprenticeship, bridging skills and confidence gap.



Foundation apprenticeship



Mapped to the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the occupational standards below, supporting progression and specialisation:

Painter and decorator

Floorlayer - textile and resilient floorcoverings

Wall and floor tiler

Floorlayer - wood - based floorcoverings



Potential opportunities

- Same level apprenticeship
- Higher level apprenticeship
- Full-time employment
- Further study

The apprentice and employer may benefit from recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience towards their next apprenticeship.



Onsite trades foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To introduce apprentices to core onsite construction roles such as bricklaying, carpentry, joinery, and plastering.

What they do:

- Carry out structural and finishing work on buildings
- Operate in both new build and refurbishment settings
- Support the wider construction team through safe and efficient practices

Daily duties:

- Roles vary depending on the trade and project type
- Engage with customers, tradespeople, and site managers

Included occupations:

- Bricklayer
- Plasterer
- Carpentry and joinery

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Construction and the built environment
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £4,000



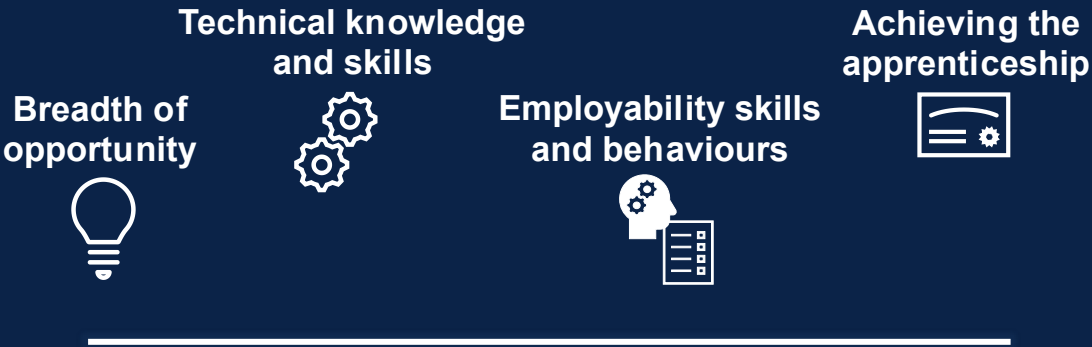
Potential apprentice

- School leaver
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Ready to start a foundation apprenticeship, bridging skills and confidence gap.



Foundation apprenticeship



Mapped to the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the occupational standards below, supporting progression and specialisation:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Bricklayer</u> | <u>Carpentry and joinery - site carpenter</u> |
| <u>Plasterer – fibrous plasterer</u> | <u>Plasterer - solid plasterer</u> |



Potential opportunities

- Same level apprenticeship
- Higher level apprenticeship
- Full-time employment
- Further study

The apprentice and employer may benefit from recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience towards their next apprenticeship.



Engineering and manufacturing foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To prepare apprentices for roles in general engineering and manufacturing, supporting production, maintenance, and assembly operations.

What they do:

- Perform tasks in machining, fabrication, welding, and additive manufacturing
- Work across sectors such as automotive, aerospace, energy, and general manufacturing
- Use safe working practices and manage resources effectively

Daily duties:

- Plan and organise tasks
- Complete work within set timeframes

Included occupations:

- Engineering operative

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Engineering and manufacturing
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £4,500



Potential apprentice

- School leaver
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Ready to start a foundation apprenticeship, bridging skills and confidence gap.



Foundation apprenticeship



Mapped to the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the occupational standards below, supporting progression and specialisation:

<u>Fabrication role</u>	<u>Maintenance role</u>
<u>Electrical & electronic engineering role</u>	<u>Mechanical manufacturing engineering role</u>



Potential opportunities

- Same level apprenticeship
- Higher level apprenticeship
- Full-time employment
- Further study

The apprentice and employer may benefit from recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience towards their next apprenticeship.



Health and social care foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To train apprentices to provide high-quality, compassionate care and support in health and social care settings.

What they do:

- Assist in clinical healthcare or personal care depending on the setting
- Work in care homes, hospitals, GP practices, community teams, and individuals' homes
- Collaborate with professionals across health and social care

Daily duties:

- Roles vary depending on the work setting or type of care provided
- Support individuals and healthcare professionals

Included occupations:

- Adult care worker
- Healthcare support worker

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Care services, Health and science
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £3,000



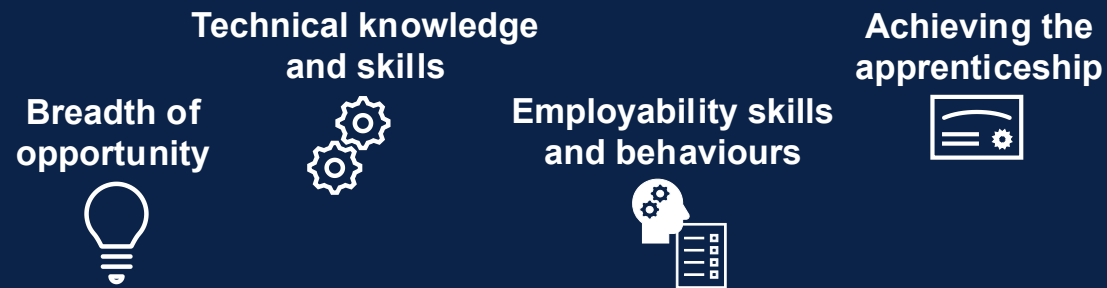
Potential apprentice

- School leaver
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Ready to start a foundation apprenticeship, bridging skills and confidence gap.



Foundation apprenticeship



Mapped to the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the occupational standards below, supporting progression and specialisation:

Adult care worker

Healthcare support worker



Potential opportunities

- Same level apprenticeship
- Higher level apprenticeship
- Full-time employment
- Further study

The apprentice and employer may benefit from recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience towards their next apprenticeship.



Hardware, network and infrastructure foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To provide apprentices with skills to support IT and telecommunications systems in various organisational settings.

What they do:

- Maintain and monitor physical and virtual systems
- Provide technical support to internal and external users
- Assist with problem resolution and system testing

Daily duties:

- Use multiple communication channels to support users
- Help ensure optimal system performance and user experience

Included occupations:

- IT solutions technician
- Digital support technician
- Cyber security technician
- Information communications technician
- Network cable installer
- Radio network technician
- Digital device repair technician

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Digital
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £4,000

Potential apprentice

- School leaver
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Ready to start a foundation apprenticeship, bridging skills and confidence gap.

Foundation apprenticeship

Technical knowledge and skills

Achieving the apprenticeship

Breadth of opportunity



Employability skills and behaviours



Mapped to the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the occupational standards below, supporting progression and specialisation:

IT solutions technician

Cyber security technician

Support technician

Network cable installer

Radio network technician

Network technician

Digital communications technician

Digital device repair technician

Digital service technician

Digital applications technician

Potential opportunities

- Same level apprenticeship
- Higher level apprenticeship
- Full-time employment
- Further study

The apprentice and employer may benefit from recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience towards their next apprenticeship.



Software and data foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To introduce apprentices to data handling and software support roles across all sectors.

What they do:

- Collect, format, store, and validate data
- Support software development and testing under guidance
- Help manage data and software functions within organisations

Daily duties:

- Retrieve, manipulate, and share data
- Follow instructions to assist with software tasks and testing

Included occupations:

- Data technician
- Software development technician
- IT solutions technician
- Digital support technician
- Cyber security technician
- Information communications technician

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Digital
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £4,000

Potential apprentice

- School leaver
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Ready to start a foundation apprenticeship, bridging skills and confidence gap.

Foundation apprenticeship

Technical knowledge and skills

Breadth of opportunity



Employability skills and behaviours



Achieving the apprenticeship



Mapped to the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the occupational standards below, supporting progression and specialisation:

Data technician

Digital service technician

Support technician

Software development technician

Digital applications technician

Digital communications technician

IT solutions technician Network technician Cyber security technician

Potential opportunities

- Same level apprenticeship
- Higher level apprenticeship
- Full-time employment
- Further study

The apprentice and employer may benefit from recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience towards their next apprenticeship.

Catering and hospitality foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To provide apprentices with skills to work in a variety of hospitality industries.

What they do:

- Work in hospitality settings including hotels, restaurants, and cafes
- Provide customer service and experiences
- Maintain food safety standards

Daily duties:

- Provide high quality hospitality services to customers
- Roles vary depending on the work setting or area they work in

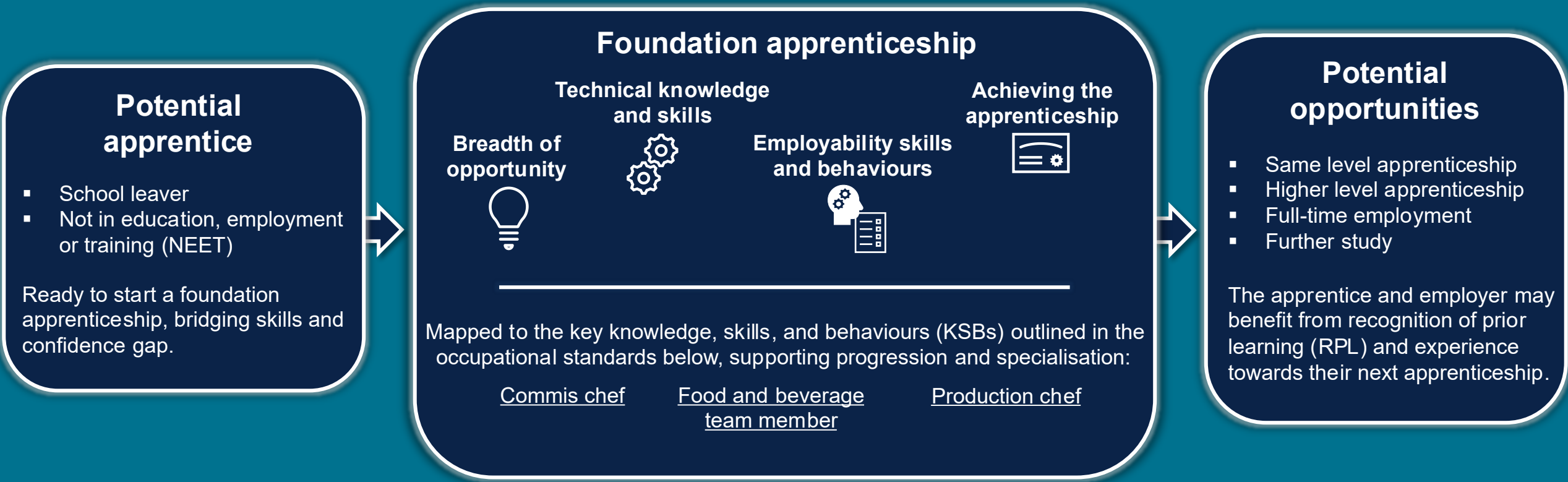
Included occupations:

- Commis chef
- Production chef
- Food and beverage team member

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Catering and hospitality
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £3,500



Retail service, supply and administration foundation apprenticeship

Purpose:

To provide apprentices with skills to work in a variety of retail, supply and administration roles.

What they do:

- Work across a range of settings including food, fashion, automotive, and manufacturing.
- Work in a team to contribute to sales and service objectives

Daily duties:

- Providing customer service
- Help support operational activities, including stock supply and administration
- Roles vary depending on the work setting or area they work in

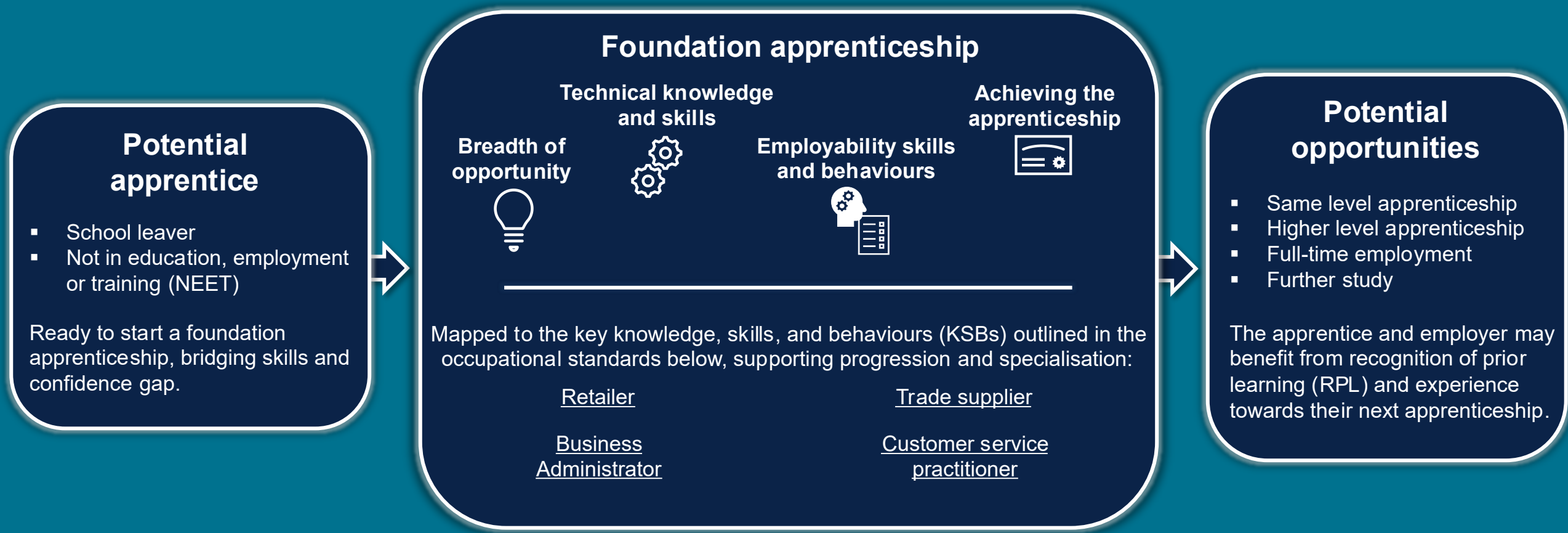
Included occupations:

- Retailer
- Trade supplier
- Business administrator
- Customer service practitioner

Visit the [Skills England website](#) for further details.



Route: Retail, service supply and administration
Typical duration: 8 months
Maximum funding: £3,500



Assets and social media



Downloadable assets

The Growth and Skills Levy resource page has the following resources that are available to download to use in your engagement activities:

- Factsheets and toolkits
- Social media assets
- Presentations

Some assets can be adapted to include your organisation's logo and contact details.



Example social media copy

Did you know foundation apprenticeships are a new way to deliver entry-level apprenticeships?

Designed to support young people at the start of their careers, foundation apprenticeships can help you to support them from entry-level through to higher-level apprenticeships, improving retention and developing partnerships with employers.

Employers can also access up to £2,000 to support their foundation apprentices.

Find out more: [LINK](#)

Remember to update your listing on Find apprenticeship training through your apprenticeship service account.

#Apprenticeships
#FoundationApprenticeships

Did you know foundation apprenticeships are Level 2 qualifications that give young people job-specific knowledge and industry experience, while helping employers meet their current and future skills needs!

Available in construction, engineering and manufacturing, digital, health and social care, catering and hospitality and retail service, supply and administration.

Employers can also access up to £2,000 to support their foundation apprentices.

Find out more: [LINK](#)

Update your listing on Find apprenticeship training through your apprenticeship service account.

#Apprenticeships
#FoundationApprenticeships

Did you know foundation apprenticeships deliver entry-level training for young people in construction, engineering and manufacturing, digital, health and social care, catering and hospitality and retail service, supply and administration?

With up to £2,000 available to support each foundation apprentice, find out more: [LINK](#)

Make sure employers can find you by updating your listing on Find apprenticeship training through your apprenticeship service account.

#Apprenticeships
#FoundationApprenticeships



Share your experience

We want to showcase how training providers are using foundation apprenticeships to create skilled career pathways for young people and build talent pipelines for employers.

Please share your foundation apprenticeship experiences by completing the form below.

Submit your response

We welcome any feedback and suggestions. Please email marcomms.mailbox@dp.gov.uk

Follow [@Apprenticeships and Skills](#) on LinkedIn for the latest information on apprenticeships and skills.

