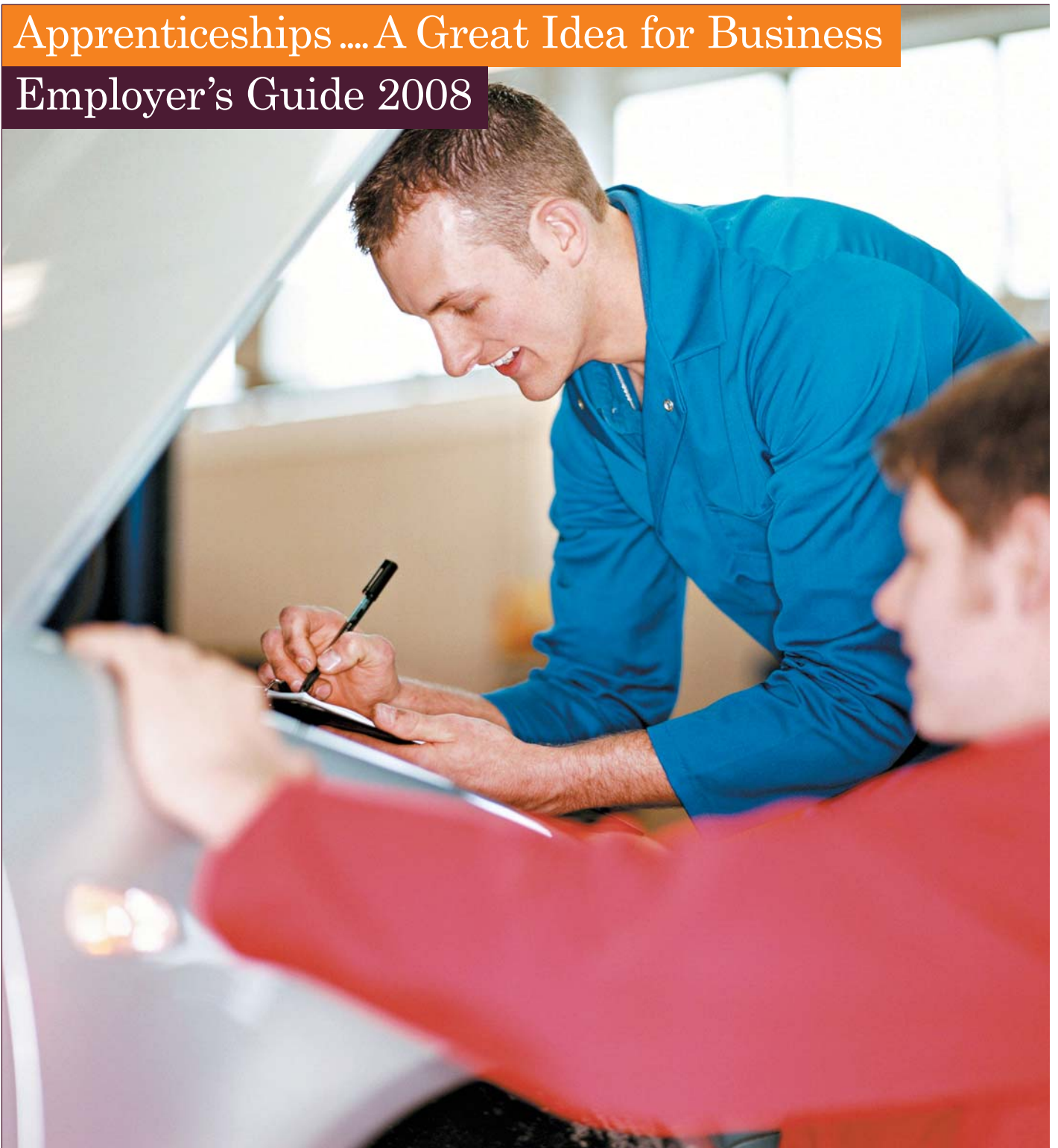


Our
future.
It's in
our hands.



Apprenticeships ... A Great Idea for Business
Employer's Guide 2008



Apprenticeships ... A Great Idea for Business

Introduction



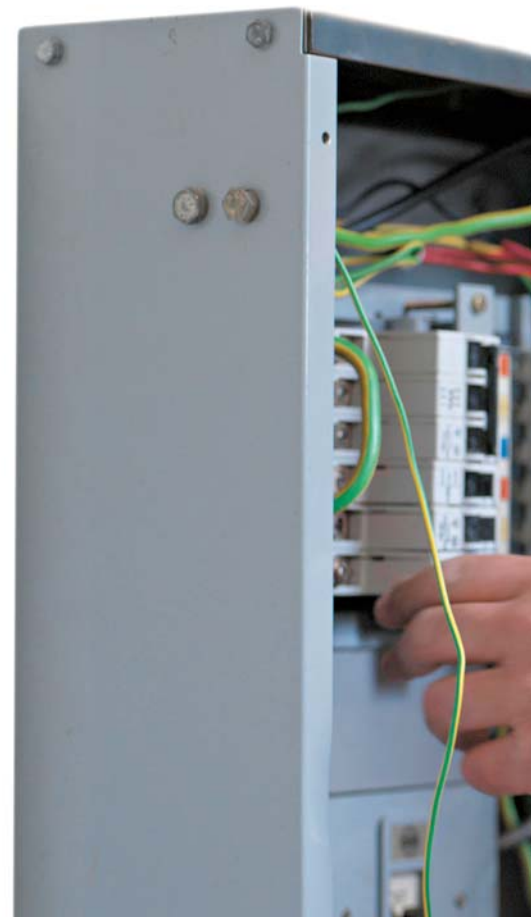
As an employer you already know that training your workforce is a good idea, but Apprenticeships are even better they're a great idea!

Would you like to benefit from:

- Cost effective recruitment?
- A well trained, motivated workforce?
- Increased productivity resulting from job focused training?
- Improved company performance?
- Increased competitive edge?
- A flexible programme with financial help to meet the costs of training?

You would? Then take a look at Apprenticeships – a proven way of training people to develop the skills you need. Your involvement is also a way of demonstrating your commitment to staff development.

This guide will give you an overview of Apprenticeships: what they are, how they work and more importantly, how your business can benefit. You will also find details of how you can become involved in the programme.



Apprenticeships ... A Great Idea for Business

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Apprenticeship?

Designed by employers for employers, an Apprenticeship is a work-based learning programme that allows you to train both your existing and any new staff you are thinking of recruiting.

All apprentices follow an 'Apprenticeship Framework'. This framework consists of a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), Key Skills qualifications, a Technical Certificate and Employment Rights and Responsibilities.

There are two framework levels available, as illustrated in the diagram to the right. As well as an Apprenticeship, which enables individuals to attain qualifications at Level 2 (equivalent to five GCSE passes at A*-C), there is also an Advanced Apprenticeship, which enables individuals to develop skills and qualifications at Level 3 (equivalent to two A Levels).

Apprenticeship Framework

NVQ Level 2

Key Skills Level 1 / 2

Technical Certificate

Employment Rights and Responsibilities

Advanced Apprenticeship Framework

NVQ Level 3

Key Skills Level 2 / 3

Technical Certificate

Employment Rights and Responsibilities



Apprenticeships ... A Great Idea for Business

Frequently Asked Questions

What are...

... National Vocational Qualifications?

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) assess competence and are designed around the skills people use at work. The Apprenticeship programme provides apprentices with an NVQ at either Level 2 or 3.

... Key Skills?

Key Skills address the personal development of an individual and may cover up to six specific areas:

- Application of number
- Communication
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others

A Key Skills certificate proves individual competence in these areas, essential to any position within an organisation. This training can be sector specific, meaning that your apprentice will develop key skills relevant to your organisation.

... Technical Certificates?

A Technical Certificate is a qualification that equips the apprentice with the knowledge and understanding which underpins the NVQ competencies. The qualification is normally completed away from the workplace, usually at a Further Education college, and offers a structured approach to teaching, including external assessment.

... Employment Rights and Responsibilities?

Each Apprenticeship framework includes a requirement for the apprentice to develop knowledge and understanding about the world of employment. This includes:

- The rights and responsibilities of workers
- The role of their organisation within the wider industry
- The effect of public law and policy on industry

How long will the training last?

One of the key benefits of the Apprenticeship programme is how flexible it is. An Apprenticeship is designed to fit around the needs of the individual and the employer. As a general guide, those studying an Apprenticeship are likely to take around 12 – 18 months to complete their programme, while those working towards an Advanced Apprenticeship will take longer to complete, normally between two and three years.

Can any of my existing staff apply for an Apprenticeship?

Your existing staff may be eligible to begin an Apprenticeship, check with your learning provider or Train to Gain skills broker.

Will the framework be relevant to my business?

There are over 160 occupational frameworks, which cover more than 80 different industry sectors, so it's highly likely there will be one to suit your business.

Your business could benefit from one of the more broad-ranging frameworks – such as Business Administration, Information Technology or Customer Service. All businesses tend to have staff in roles which need the skills involved in these particular Apprenticeships. Or, you may benefit from more sector specific frameworks; these range from Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Engineering and Retail through to Travel and Hospitality.

Who decides what's in the framework?

The Apprenticeship frameworks themselves are designed by business for business. Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), including business representatives from the relevant industry sector, decide on the course content. And, because they genuinely understand your business sector, you can be assured that the training will be relevant.

How does the Apprenticeship programme work in practice?

The Apprenticeship programme is funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and is co-ordinated and delivered by a network of approved learning providers.

The learning providers we work with are listed in the Directory of Provision, which is available from LSC North East.

There is a lot of choice – especially in the more broad-ranging frameworks. But, whichever provider you choose to work with, their role is to:

- Identify suitable candidates (new recruits and / or existing employees) who may benefit from the Apprenticeship programme
- Help you to decide which Apprenticeship framework is right for your business
- Plan and design the learning programme to meet your needs and those of the individual
- Arrange off-the-job training to support the learning that is taking place in the workplace
- Monitor the progress of the apprentice and provide additional help and support where appropriate
- Assess the competence of the apprentice in the workplace
- Work with awarding bodies to award nationally recognised qualifications
- Provide on-going support and training to you and your staff in all aspects of the above

Most apprentices will be required to attend some off-the-job training, which, where possible, will be arranged to suit your business. For the remainder of the delivery, a learning provider will visit the apprentice at regular intervals in the workplace and will involve the apprentice's supervisor in reviewing the progress being made.

Apprenticeships for Adults

Apprenticeships for Adults are being introduced nationally for the first time, following a number of successful regional trials.

The qualification is exactly the same as an existing Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship.

What Apprenticeships for Adults are available in our region?

In the North East, limited numbers of Apprenticeships for Adults are available in the following sectors:

- Automotive
- Chemicals
- Childcare
- Construction
- Digital
- Engineering Construction
- Engineering
- Food and Drink
- Health and Social Care
- Land Based
- Polymers
- Rail Engineering
- Retail
- Transport

Priority is given to certain groups of individuals for example, unemployed people. To find out more about Apprenticeships for Adults in our region, please call the Train to Gain skills brokerage service on **0800 015 55 45**.

Apprenticeships ... A Great Idea for Business

Frequently Asked Questions

What are my responsibilities as an employer?

The Apprenticeship programme is promoted as a 'job with training' and so employed status from day one is strongly encouraged. As the employer, you must give your apprentice an induction into their role and provide some on-the-job training.

You are also responsible for the wages paid to your apprentice. Whilst apprentices are generally exempt (except apprentices over 19 who have completed one year of their Apprenticeship) from the National Minimum Wage legislation, the LSC does require full-time apprentices to be paid a minimum wage of £80 per week. For more information, call the National Minimum Wage Helpline on 0845 6000 678 or see www.dti.gov.uk/employment/pay/national-minimum-wage.

Apprentices should be subject to the organisation's normal employment terms and conditions. Any arrangements such as probationary periods, part-time hours and temporary contracts should be made with the full agreement of the young person and the learning provider.

What about funding?

The LSC contributes towards the cost of training the apprentice, which is paid directly to the learning provider who you choose to work with. However, please note that in some instances you may be required to make a contribution towards the training costs. The amount will vary depending on the framework and qualification level the apprentice is working towards. The learning provider you choose to work with will be able to advise you what contribution, if any, will be required.

Will there be much paperwork involved?

We try to keep paperwork for the employer to a minimum. However, as the training is Government funded, there is a need to collect certain information to ensure that the money is being spent on high quality training. Your learning provider will be responsible for ensuring all administrative arrangements are met.

How will the Apprenticeship programme help my business?

Apprenticeships are designed to help employees reach a high level of competency and performance, and in doing so can help your organisation address its skills gaps, making it more effective, more productive and more competitive. Join the 150,000 companies that currently employ apprentices and you could benefit from:

- **Cost effective recruitment**
Learning providers generally have waiting lists of individuals keen to become an apprentice and may be able to help you if you need to recruit a new member of staff. This will save you the time and expense of advertising vacancies.
- **A well trained, motivated workforce**
Providing expertise that's not only specific to your industry, but also directly relevant to your business, Apprenticeships are literally designed around your business needs by industry specialists who genuinely understand what you do. As a result, apprentices are highly motivated, trained to the level you require and eager to learn more. Apprenticeships are also an ideal way to train your existing employees to ensure they have the skills that your business needs.
- **Increased productivity leading to improved company performance**
Well trained, motivated workers who have received relevant training, will work harder and more effectively for your business, giving you a positive return on your investment.
- **Increased competitive edge**
Developing young people through the Apprenticeship programme can bridge skills gaps, providing you with the skilled employees you need to compete effectively.
- **A flexible programme with financial help to meet the costs of training**
A flexible programme that can be tailored to meet your needs and tied into your existing training programmes, with Government funding available (please note, this is dependent on the business sector and payable to the learning provider).

I'm interested! How do I get started?

If you're interested in joining the 150,000 companies that currently employ over a quarter of a million apprentices, the Directory of Provision 2008 will help you get started. Available from LSC North East, the Directory includes a comprehensive list of the learning providers that deliver Apprenticeships in your geographical and occupational areas.

You can also contact the national Apprenticeship helpline on **08000 150 400**, or visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk

If you require more general workforce development advice through the Train to Gain skills brokerage service, call **0800 015 55 45** or visit www.traintogain.gov.uk





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