



Recruiting an Apprentice
5 Steps to Finding a Successful Candidate
Sutton Apprenticeship Hub

This 'Employer's' Guide to Taking on an Apprentice' has been created by the Sutton Apprenticeship Hub - a free resource for Sutton based business brought to you by Sutton Council.

The guide will educate employers on everything they need to know about hiring an apprentice, from creating the job description, to the type of qualification and training delivered, to the funding involved, and everything in between.

The guide outlines five key steps to successfully find an apprentice to join your organisation. It is particularly useful for employers who are hiring an apprentice for the first time and are completely unfamiliar with the process. Any further questions, please email info@getaheadsutton.org.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a way for young people and adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, gaining a real qualification and a real future. Hiring apprentices helps businesses to grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Depending on the sector and job role, an apprenticeship can take anything between one and five years to complete. It is a package of training and qualifications.

Most of the training is on-the-job at an employer's premises, working with a mentor to learn job specific skills in the workplace. Off-the-job training is provided by a training organisation (sometimes referred to as a training provider) and may be delivered in the workplace or through day or block release at premises away from the workplace.

STEP 1 - Writing the job description

Job description

A job description should include a job title, the main duties and purpose of the role, information about the company and the job location. It should be simple, straight-to-the-point and easy for the candidate to get a feel of what is expected of them on a day-to-day basis, as part of their role.

It should also briefly outline any desired skills e.g. communication skills, time management, ICT, and required qualifications e.g. GCSEs or A-Levels. A weekly or monthly salary must be included, in

addition to the number of hours they are expected to work per week, and the age range of candidates i.e. 16 - 19.

You can find lots of job description templates on the internet, we also have a template you can download on the Apprenticeship Hub [here](#).

Apprentice salary & hours

In general, apprentices work for at least 30 hours a week. However, the number of hours an apprentice works each week can be reduced if the length of the Apprenticeship programme is extended accordingly.

An apprentice must receive the appropriate minimum wage. The rate is £3.30 for those under 19 or in their first year of an apprenticeship. If an apprentice is 19 or over and past their first year they get the rate that applies to their age. That is £5.30 for 18- to 20-year-olds and £6.70 for those aged 21 or over. For more details on the national minimum wage, visit the website [here](#). All apprenticeships will take at least 12 months to complete, and will lead to a national qualification that is recognised by employers.

STEP 2 - Finding a training provider

Most employers use an external training organisation to provide the apprenticeship training. There are two main types of training organisations – colleges of further education and independent training providers, which can be in the private or voluntary sector.

Training organisations who deliver apprenticeships that result in nationally recognised qualifications receive government funding through a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). Some training organisations will subcontract with other organisations to provide some (or all) of their training.

The Sutton Apprenticeship Hub works with local training providers and colleges who will deliver the training for the apprentice, as well as help them to complete their coursework and gain their qualifications within a 12 – 16 month period. With a college, the apprentice would have a day release to complete their coursework, whereas with a private training provider, an assessor would visit them regularly within the workplace to monitor progress and provide necessary support.

Once the job description is complete, we will match you with a suitable training provider who can deliver the apprenticeship framework. They will then provide a range of support, including the following:

- Develop a detailed apprenticeship programme that meets your needs
- Tell you the level of government funding available for the apprenticeship programme and whether you are entitled to any financial support
- Discuss timescales for the training and develop training plans to fit your and the apprentice's needs
- Manage the recruitment process and shortlist suitable candidates to interview

- Manage the paperwork once a potential apprentice has been found
- Provide training to the apprentice
- Provide ongoing assessment, support and advice throughout the training period to you and your apprentice

STEP 3 - Government funding & apprenticeship levy

AGE Grant

The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds ('AGE 16 to 24') is aimed at helping eligible employers to offer young people employment through the apprenticeship programme, by providing wage grants to assist with recruitment. You may be eligible for a £1,500 VAT-free AGE Grant if:

- You are a small employer (those with fewer than 50 staff)
- Your apprentice is aged 16 to 24
- You have not employed an apprentice in the last 12 months

The grant aims to support businesses who would not otherwise be in a position to recruit individuals aged 16 to 24 into employment through the apprenticeship programme. An employer, working with an approved Government-funded training organisation, can receive up to five grants in total.

The AGE grant has been extended until the end of the 2016/2017 academic year to provide transitional support until the levy funding system for Apprenticeships is in place.

Apprenticeship Levy

The apprenticeship levy is a 'payroll tax', which is set at 0.5% of an employer's total wage bill. It is payable irrespective of whether your business currently has an apprentice or not, and is collected by HMRC via PAYE. The levy is coming into effect in April 2017.

Funding for Apprenticeship training in England will be available via a new Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) account, from where employers can then pay for the training that their apprentices receive.

[Registration for the Digital Apprenticeship Service](#) is now open to all levy-paying employers.

For more information, download our Apprenticeship Levy Guide [here](#).

STEP 4 - Advertising the vacancy

With a complete job description and training provider on board, the Sutton Apprenticeship Hub will help you to advertise the vacancy to the right audience. The Hub has a database of over 400 local students aged 16 – 24, and can provide support on suitable applicants, by proactively recommending prospective candidates to be put through the the interview stage.

Below is the standard recruitment process for the Sutton Apprenticeship Hub (SAH):

1. Employer to create job description (must meet SAH criteria, see below)
2. Employer to share vacancy link and job description as word document / PDF with the Hub
3. Hub will find suitable training provider to deliver apprenticeship & will introduce via email
4. Employer to register to Hub as a 'business' and go to 'Profile' to click the 'Post a job' button
5. Employer to select training provider from drop-down menu and upload job description & link
6. Hub to work with training provider to advertise vacancy on website & social media channels
7. Hub to work with training provider to recommend suitable candidates for role
8. Employer & training provider to schedule interviews with suitable candidates
9. Employer & training provider to share feedback with Hub on candidates & next steps
10. Employer & training provider to select candidate and start apprenticeship

You can also advertise your apprenticeship vacancies on your own website as well as using the [National Apprenticeship Service](#). Some employers also advertise their vacancies in other ways, for example: - local newspapers – trade magazines – online job and recruitment sites.

STEP 5 - Shortlisting candidates and selecting the right one

Ideally the shortlist of suitable candidates should be created by more than one person to help to avoid possible bias. It is important that you don't discriminate against any applicants. To compile your shortlist use the job description and person specification to match applications and eliminate those who do not have the basic requirements for the job.

With the rest of your department, you should identify dates you are available to hold the interviews on. Be realistic about the number of applicants you will have time to interview, allowing enough time for preparation and discussion before and after the interview.

Upon finalising the shortlist, you will need to liaise with your training organisation to notify the shortlisted candidates by telephone, email or letter. Ensure you advise the candidate of the following:

- Where and when the interview will be taking place
- Any additional information you would like them to bring along
- If you'd like them to do a practical test, ask them to bring suitable clothing/ equipment
- The name and job titles of the interview panel members
- Ask the candidates if they have any special requirements you should be aware of

Once the interview stages are complete, and you have selected a successful candidate, it is good practice to give them a phone call to notify them of their success, followed by an official 'offer letter' offering them the position. You will also need to notify your training organisation as they may take on the role of notifying any unsuccessful candidates.

Unsuccessful candidates should be notified within the given timescale and employers and training organisations should be prepared to offer feedback – this is where our interview feedback tool could be used. Hopefully, your chosen candidate will accept the position and you can then move on to the formalities of preparing a Contract of Employment and come to a mutual decision on a suitable start date. For more information on this, please click [here](#).

The Hub's advice to you

Apprentices are employed by you and have the same rights as other employees, along with paid time for study. As employees, apprentices earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain on-the-job experience and skills.

Employing an apprentice is an exciting time for a business, as it gives you the opportunity to develop, grow, and nurture a young person's skills, knowledge and general experience in the working environment.

We encourage you to view this apprenticeship as a way to secure a long-term asset rather than cheap labour for a year (as some do) because the apprentice has potential to be extremely valuable, providing fresh insight and creativity that can help to improve efficiency for the department.