

The Employer

How do I recruit an apprentice?

There are several ways in which you can recruit an apprentice.

If you already have an employee who you think would be interested/suitable, you could approach them to see if they would be willing to carry out an apprenticeship.

You could advertise for an apprentice. There are several different ways that you could advertise. For example, you could use the Job Centre Plus website (www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk), job agencies, specialist apprenticeship websites, local newspapers etc.

You could also try contacting your local colleges to see if they have any contacts of people looking for an employer to carry out an apprenticeship.

If you would like help or more information, The National Apprenticeship Service website, www.apprenticeships.org.uk is very helpful for employers looking to recruit an apprentice. You can contact them on 08000 150 600 or even download an online enquiry form and they will be able to advise you for free.

How do I find a Learning Provider?

Many colleges offer apprenticeship training in the automotive sector as it is a popular sector. So contacting your local college(s) may be a good starting option.

Alternatively there are many learning providers other than colleges. The Apprenticeship Service website has a search engine available allowing you to search for your local learning providers who offer the training that you require for your apprentice. They also have an employer enquiry form if you require further help. Here is the link to the page where you can find the search engine and employer enquiry form:

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/Other-Questions/FAQDetails37.aspx>

What are the Learning Provider's responsibilities?

The responsibilities of the learning provider are:

- To deliver your apprentice's off-the-job training.
- To provide learning support to your apprentice through out the duration of their apprenticeship.
- To look after the paper work side of things.
- To communicate your apprentice's progress regularly with you, the employer.

Who will fund the learning for my apprentice?

Northern Ireland

Funding for apprenticeships is provided by the Government (The Department for Employment & Learning). Funding is available for all candidates over the age of 16 and employers are not expected to make a direct contribution to the cost of the training.

The funding is paid directly to Learning provider upon completion of the apprenticeship.

How much do I pay an apprentice?

Apprentices Aged 16-18:

As of 1st August 2009, the minimum that an employer can legally pay an apprentice aged 16 to 18 increased from £80 per week to £95 per week. However recent research shows the current average that most employers pay apprentices is £175 a week, but this all depends on your business needs/budget. Apprentices aged 16 to 18 are not entitled to National Minimum Wage for their age range.

Apprentices Aged 19+:

If you take on an apprentice that starts their apprenticeship aged 19+ or turns 19 within their first year of beginning their apprenticeship, legally you have to pay the apprentice the national minimum wage for their age range, which is £4.83 for 18-21 and £5.80 for 22+, as of 1st October 2009.

Some apprentices may be entitled to additional benefits such as child care and transport funding. For more information on this to see what the requirements for this are, go to the **Directgov** website, which is www.direct.gov.uk and search under 'Care to Learn' or alternatively contact their Learner Support Helpline direct on **0800 121 8989**.

How many hours do I employ an apprentice for?

You will need to employ an apprentice for a minimum of 16 hours a week in order for the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship. However, most employers employ the apprentice on a full time basis, which is normally 37-40 hours per week depending on your business needs.

How often will my apprentice attend to the Learning Provider?

There are two different ways in which this could be done. You could do this by "Day Release", which is where your apprentice attends the External Learning Provider for one day a week. Or you could do this by "Block Release", which is where your apprentice attends the External Learning Provider for a consecutive amount of days, for example one week per month.

What are the requirements to look for when recruiting an apprentice?

If you are looking for an apprentice to start off on Level 2, then the candidate does not need to have any formal qualifications as an entry requirement. However, it is ideal for the candidate to have GCSEs in Maths, English and Science.

If you are looking for an apprentice to start on Level 3, then it is normally required that the candidate has already completed Level 2, but this is debatable depending on the experience and training the candidate has previously had.

All candidates have to be living in Northern Ireland and are not allowed to be in full time education in order to be allowed onto the apprenticeship.

As an employer what are my responsibilities?

Your responsibilities as an employer are:

- To give your apprentice an induction into their role.
- To appoint a member of staff to be a mentor to your apprentice.
- To provide ongoing support through out you apprentice's training and employment.
- To allow your apprentice time out of work to attend the learning provider.
- To allow your apprentice time out of work for study leave when appropriate.
- To pay your apprentice's wages and national insurance contributions.
- To provide your apprentice with all the normal benefits that all your other employees get e.g. holiday pay, maternity leave, company benefits etc.

What should I know regarding Health & Safety?

As an employer it is your legal responsibility to make sure that all your staff have a safe environment to work in. Legally you have to have Health & Safety guidelines and provide your staff with Health & Safety training.

A person aged under 18 years is still classed as a minor, so when taking on an apprentice that is under 18 years you need to be aware of the Health & Safety rules regarding minors. For example, they may not be able to operate certain machinery or carry out certain tasks.

As it is most likely that a person aged under 18 years has come straight out of main stream education and has probably not experienced full time employment, they may not know the risks and implications of Health & Safety in the workplace. This means that extra time and care may be needed to educate them in Health & Safety in the workplace.

What are the benefits of having an apprentice?

Taking on an apprentice can financially benefit your company in several ways and the investment that you make by having an apprentice is quickly paid back, several times over too.

A study measuring the long term financial benefit to investing in apprenticeships, carried out by Sheffield University, has shown that A level 3 advanced apprentice will generate an additional lifetime benefit to themselves and their employer of £105,000 compared to someone who does not gain an apprenticeship. The level 2 additional benefit is £73,000.

Skills shortages is a big threat to UK businesses, so having an apprentice is a cost effective way of bringing your company up-to-date with the latest skills that it requires, especially with the Government contributions towards training. As things become more competitive for new business, having an apprentice who is receiving the most-up-to-date training and acquiring the latest skills, this will give your company an edge.

It is more cost effective to train an apprentice rather than to employ someone who already has the skills you require. Also, having an apprentice will give you more control over the way that the job is carried out as it is easier to train an apprentice as to how you would like things done, rather than employ someone who has trained elsewhere and may already be set in their ways.

By taking on apprentices, this is a solid way of building up your business for the future by repeatedly injecting new skills into the company and keeping it up-to-date with modern technology.

Taking on an apprentice provides new talent, which is essential to any business for growth and progression.

You can take on an apprentice at any time of the year, there is no set intake date and there is no limit to the amount of apprentices you can take on.

As apprentices have made a choice themselves to commit to their apprenticeship, they are generally enthusiastic, motivated, willing, disciplined and dedicated. This provides your company with good staff moral and a positive working ethic.

Taking on an apprentice shows that you as a company are committed to investing in the future not just of your company, but of people too. This promotes a healthy work ethic. As more and more companies take on apprentices, a new scheme called 'The Apprentices Employers Badge' has been launched to recognise businesses who employ apprentices to highlight their commitment. The badge gets displayed on your company web site and your company logo gets displayed on the Apprenticeship website. For more information on how to use the badge and to download it follow this link:

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/Employers-Badge.aspx>

For Employers In Northern Ireland there is an incentive scheme whereby when an apprentice has completed the full apprenticeship, the employer receives some money. The amount paid depends on the apprenticeship undertaken. For more information on this incentive scheme have a look at the Department of Employment and Learning website, which is: <http://www.delni.gov.uk>.