



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

APPRENTICESHIPS.

A GENIUS DECISION.

EMPLOYER TOOLKIT



Prentisiaethau
Apprenticeships



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Llywodraeth Cymru
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APPRENTICESHIPS IN WALES

APPRENTICESHIPS.
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Our approach to the delivery of apprenticeships will be driven by the needs of the Welsh economy and communities.

All employers in Wales can access and engage in high quality training that will drive a knowledge based economy, allowing employers and their employees to achieve their full-potential. Apprenticeships are an essential ingredient for achieving economic success. By offering apprenticeships, businesses are not only helping their own business to grow but are making an invaluable contribution to boosting our economy and equipping the future workforce with the right skills to ensure Wales remains competitive.

Apprenticeships are designed around the needs of the employer and can help transform businesses by providing the skilled workers and a future pipeline of talent. Some of the most forward-thinking companies in the world have an apprenticeship programme.

The Welsh Government has developed its apprenticeship system to meet the needs and priorities of Wales, with a focus on quality and value for money. We already have a strong record of quality and this is reflected in our Apprenticeship framework completion rates which are consistently over 80 per cent.

Our Apprenticeships Skills Policy Plan was launched in 2017 to address the ever changing demands of Welsh businesses and the wider economy and in response to priority areas where skills shortages are being reported. The policy reflects the step change towards higher level technical and professional skills, promoting efficiency and portability within our priority sectors.

Our investment in skills is an investment in the future of the country, and of both our businesses and people. Our focus is on aligning and raising the level of the skills market designed to meet employer needs with a system that is responsive to industry changes, particularly in the sectors that drive growth and prosperity.

Regional Skills Partnerships

Through engaging with these partnerships, employers have a mechanism to feed through their current and future needs in terms of framework content on apprenticeships. Further information on the three Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) in Wales can be found on **page 14**.

The Wales Apprenticeship Advisory Board (WAAB)

An employer-led group that was established in 2017. Its remit is to scope and prioritise the future demand and content of apprenticeship frameworks in Wales. Further information is available on **page 15**.

APPRENTICESHIPS SKILLS POLICY PLAN

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The Welsh Government is committed to delivering a minimum of 100,000 high quality, all-age apprenticeships until 2021.

Our delivery priorities until 2021 are:

- **Increasing the number of apprentices aged 16-19:** increasing the take-up of apprenticeships amongst 16-19 year olds and raising the number of school leavers going on to high quality apprenticeships.
- **Addressing skills shortages:** developing apprenticeships, particularly in growth sectors and emerging job categories, in line with priorities determined by Regional Skills Partnerships.
- **Developing higher level skills:** focusing on apprenticeships at level 4 and above, where returns tend to be higher and at the level most successful European countries deliver. Continuing to monitor the effectiveness and relevance of Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2).
- **Developing skills pathways:** integrating apprenticeships into the wider education system.

Our priorities will focus on:

- **An all-age programme:** increasing the number of people who are able to access quality apprenticeships.
- **Supporting performance measures:** focusing on the achievement of meaningful and sustainable employment.
- **Supporting learners:** ensuring that provision and opportunities are easy to access to apply and recruit for.
- **Delivering apprenticeships in Welsh and bilingually:** ensuring all learners have the opportunity to maintain and develop their Welsh language skills.
- **Establishing a new system for reviewing and developing apprenticeships:** ensuring apprenticeships are designed to meet employer needs and are responsive to industry changes.

THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

What does it mean for your business?

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The Apprenticeship Levy is a UK-wide employment tax introduced by the UK Government that came into force on 6 April 2017.

It is collected across the whole of the UK by HM Revenue and Customs through the PAYE system. The Welsh Government will continue to deliver its Apprenticeship Programme via the Welsh apprenticeship provider network. There are no plans to operate a voucher system as in England.

We have set up a team of advisors who are able to support employers in determining the impact of the Levy and the training options available. This team will assess how current apprenticeships meet employer needs and how employers can maximise funding from the Welsh Government.

Who pays the Levy?

The Levy applies to all UK employers, whether private or public sector or charities, with a 'pay bill' of £3 million or more annually.



How is the Levy calculated?

The Apprenticeship Levy is charged at 0.5% of your annual pay bill, and is paid monthly.

To find out more, visit www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-apprenticeship-levy



Further information

If you have specific questions about the Levy, you can obtain advice from the Welsh Government Apprenticeship Unit

To find out more, e-mail DFES-ApprenticeshipUnit@gov.wales



UNDERSTANDING APPRENTICESHIPS IN WALES

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We encourage all employers to assess their workforce planning needs and consider how apprenticeship funding could help support future training/upskilling and recruitment. To support you, we have provided you with some key information which is summarised below:

Levels of Apprenticeships

There are different levels of apprenticeships to suit your business and workforce needs.

Go to **page 7** for an overview of the levels available.

Our Provider Network

We have a quality approved network of training providers in Wales, available to support your needs.

Go to **page 10** for contact details.

Framework Content

In Wales an apprentice will follow an approved Welsh Apprenticeship Framework.

Go to **page 9** for further information.

Framework Funding Values

To help you understand the value you are getting from our apprenticeship system, we publish a list of apprenticeship framework rates.

Go to **page 13** for further information.

Our Priority Sectors

A full list of the current Welsh frameworks being delivered and the training providers delivering those can be found on our website. We are reducing Level 2 apprenticeships in non-priority sectors unless there is evidence of progression to level 3.

Go to **page 11** for our website details.

Information and Support for Employers

Further information, advice, guidance and support are available. Choose the option that best suits your needs.

Go to **page 11** for further information on the contact points available to you.

LEVELS OF APPRENTICESHIPS

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Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation apprentices study towards qualifications equivalent to 5 GCSEs or NVQ Level 2 and often go on to complete Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
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Apprenticeships

Apprentices gain valuable on-the-job skills whilst studying towards a nationally recognised qualification equivalent to 5 GCSEs (at A*-C), 2 A-Levels or an NVQ Level 3.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
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Higher Apprenticeships

Higher apprentices work towards a qualification equivalent to a HND/HNC or Foundation Degree.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
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Degree Apprenticeships

By combining higher level learning and employment, employers can develop their workforce and apprentices can gain a degree at the same time as building their careers and earning a salary.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
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Welsh Language and Bilingual Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Wales can be studied in English or Welsh, or even bilingually, depending on the employer's needs. There are business benefits to employers who use the Welsh language and providing a Welsh service to Welsh speakers can improve customer service.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Businesses in Wales of all sizes are eligible. Most of the training will be carried out by you the employer and you will work with an approved training provider, who will manage the apprentice's training and assessment. Anyone in Wales over the age of 16 can apply for an apprenticeship and benefit from the opportunities offered.

Which of my staff are eligible for apprenticeship funding?

- **Learners aged 16-19:** we will seek to support apprenticeships (at all levels), irrespective of the length of time the learner has been in their job role.
- **Learners aged 20+:** we will seek to support apprenticeships (at all levels), however there are restrictions at Level 2 in our non-priority sectors of Business Administration, Retail and Customer Service and Hair & Beauty.

Encouraging applications from disabled people is good for business. It can help you to:

- increase the number of high quality applicants available
- create a workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers it serves and the community in which it is based
- bring additional skills to the business, such as the ability to use British Sign Language (BSL), which could result in large savings

The costs of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled employees are often low.

The benefits of retaining an experienced, skilled employee who has acquired an impairment are usually greater than recruiting and training new staff. It is also good for the individual.

The Access to Work scheme can provide help to pay for special equipment, adaptations or support worker services to help disabled people with support costs in the workplace. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work

WELSH APPRENTICESHIP FRAMEWORKS

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All frameworks in Wales include:

A competency qualification

Falling under the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).

A technical qualification

Relevant to the skill, trade or occupation specific to that apprenticeship.

Other qualifications or requirements

As specified for the particular occupation.

Essential Skills* Wales qualifications include:

- mandatory application of number and communication
- digital literacy skills if applicable within the framework

The Wales Essential Skills Test (WEST) is an online assessment tool that evaluates competency levels in literacy, numeracy and (if required) digital literacy. It is aimed at supporting individuals achieve their overall apprenticeship.

Our frameworks and their content have been created to ensure that apprentices are equipped with the relevant knowledge and qualifications to enable them to progress in their workplace and into the future.

Entry level requirements and qualifications are detailed within each framework.

Employers are encouraged to research the framework content. This can be done by visiting Apprenticeship Certification Wales at **www.acwcerts.co.uk**

*unless proxy exemptions exist relevant to the framework requirements.

APPRENTICESHIP PROVIDER CONTACTS

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The Welsh Government Apprenticeship Programme is delivered by a network of training providers across Wales.

ACT Training

Matthew Burnett

matthewburnett@acttraining.org.uk

Cambrian Training Company

Anne Jones

anne@cambriantraining.com

Donna Heath

donna@cambriantraining.com

Cardiff and Vale College / QSA Consortium

Maureen Bielski

mbielski@cavc.ac.uk

Coleg Cambria

Amanda Holmes

employers@cambria.ac.uk

Educ8

Ann Nicholas

annN@educ8training.ac.uk

Gower College Swansea

Rachel Searle

rachel.searle@gcs.ac.uk

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Jane Howells

wblconsortium@gllm.ac.uk

ITEC Training Solutions

Lee Grindlay

l.grindlay@itecskills.co.uk

Pembrokeshire College

Berni Tyler

b.tyler@pembrokeshire.ac.uk

Skills Academy Wales at NPTC Group

Louise Akers

louise.akers@nptcgroup.ac.uk



SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS IN WALES

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Business Wales Skills Gateway

The Business Wales Skills Gateway will provide you with information on all aspects of our Apprenticeship Programme. We have a dedicated team of Employer Liaison Advisors who are available to discuss your apprenticeship requirements in more detail.

Complete the [Expression of Interest form](#) for further help and support.

 www.businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/skills-and-training-programmes/apprenticeships

 03000 6 03000

 /apprenticeshipscymru

 @apprenticewales

Training providers

If you know your apprenticeship training requirements to meet your business needs, you can contact one of our training providers* direct.

(see **page 10** for contact details)

*this route is not applicable for Degree Apprenticeships.

APPRENTICESHIPS IN WALES

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Q & A

1. Why is the apprenticeship system different in Wales?

Skills, including apprenticeships, is a matter devolved to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government has developed its apprenticeship system to meet the needs and priorities of Wales. Wales has a focus on quality to ensure value for money. Apprenticeship delivery and funding is prioritised based on the needs of the economy and employers. For example, we have established Regional Skills Partnerships to engage with employers and provide us with intelligence on skills needs and gaps. We prioritise our provision in line with evidenced need.

2. How are apprenticeships delivered in Wales?

Apprenticeships are delivered and administered through a procured network of quality assured training providers. These can be found on **page 10**.

The provision we commission each year is based on both intelligence from Regional Skills Partnerships and information directly gained from employers.

3. How will the Levy money come to Wales?

The overall allocation that the Welsh Government receives from the UK Government is arrived at through the Barnett Formula. Whilst at the 2015 UK Spending Review, the UK Government allocated resources to Whitehall departments to cover programmes financed by the Apprenticeship Levy. These additions were offset by cuts to other programmes, including existing apprenticeship programmes. In aggregate, the UK Government's Spending Review 2015 means that the Welsh Government's budget will continue to reduce in real terms over the coming years.

Funding provided to Wales is not ring-fenced. A fundamental principle of devolution is that Welsh Ministers allocate resources in their budget according to Welsh priorities, as approved by the Assembly. The Welsh Government will not know how much employers in Wales have paid to HM Revenue and Customs.

APPRENTICESHIPS IN WALES

Q & A

4. Will a digital voucher system operate in Wales in the same way as England?

The Welsh Government has no plans to introduce a digital voucher system. We have seen no evidence that a voucher system would improve quality within the system.

There have also been difficulties in the past with education and training vouchers systems in the UK. Many employers and employer bodies have criticised the system being proposed in England.

5. How will the Levy impact on employers with a cross border workforce?

Irrespective of where the apprentice lives, or where the employer is based, **Welsh Government** funding and priorities apply where an apprentice is **working in Wales for 51% or more** of his/her time.

Irrespective of where the apprentice lives, the funding/voucher arrangements and priorities of the **UK Government** apply where an apprentice is **working in England for 50% or more** of his/her time.

- call the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on **08000 150 600**
- visit **www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy**
- e-mail **nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk**

6. How do I calculate my return on investment (Levy payer) or understand the value of the training provision I am receiving for my company?

You can now access a list of the framework values per apprenticeship on the Welsh Government website. This does not give you a definitive value as they are subject to change due to the nature of our contracting arrangements, but they will provide you with an outline value to enable you to calculate your return on investment as a Levy payer or just to provide you with an overall value of the training provision you are receiving.

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Q & A

7. How can I engage with the Regional Skills Partnerships?

Regional skills delivery is a key policy focus going forward and is part of a growing agenda set against a context of a strengthened UK Government-driven, regionally focused skills landscape, involving Enterprise Zones, City Region deals and Growth Bids.

In Wales, the ambition is to stimulate employment and skills activity by encouraging skills providers to link their delivery and funding plans to opportunities created by strategic investments and business growth in their regions. The three Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) in North, South West and Mid and South East Wales are well established, with recognised structures and productive relationships across employers and key stakeholders within their respective regions. The Regional Skills Partnerships are:

Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnerships (CCRSP)

Contact Huw Wilkinson:

huw.wilkinson@newport.gov.uk

or www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/sector/skills-partnership

Regional Learning and Skills Partnership for South West and Mid Wales

Contact Jane Lewis:

JElewis@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

or www.rlp.org.uk/eng/home

North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) Regional Skills Partnership North Wales

Contact Sian Lloyd-Roberts:

sianlloydroberts@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

or www.northwaleseab.co.uk/jobs-and-skills/regional-skills-partnership



Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership

Regional Skills and Learning Partnership (RSLP)

North Wales Economic Ambition Board

Q & A

8. What is the Wales Apprenticeship Advisory Board (WAAB)?

We are continuously reviewing apprenticeships to meet challenging technical needs and will continue to work with employers and industry groups to ensure our offer meets evolving industry requirements. We recognised that employers need to have greater input into the design of our apprenticeship frameworks and have created mechanisms for that to happen (see information on Regional Skills Partnerships and WAAB).

The newly established WAAB has been created with the remit to establish an employer-led structure to directly influence the content on offer to employers. The board has representation from Levy and non-Levy paying employers.

Employers now have a clear channel to feed through current and future framework requirements, challenge the learning content on our programme or inform/advise on the design of new apprenticeship frameworks.

Employers should contact their local Regional Skills Partnership in the first instance to feed through current and emerging framework considerations.

HOW TO RECRUIT AN APPRENTICE

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- 1. Apprentices in Wales would follow an apprenticeship framework** suitable to their needs and level. As an employer you should work with your training provider to consider the framework that is most suitable. You can search Apprenticeship Certification Wales (ACW) at www.acwcerts.co.uk by subject or sector. Frameworks provide you with key information such as:
 - Job roles applicable to the framework content
 - Qualifications
 - Competency, Knowledge and Essential Skills content
- 2. We can help you find an approved training provider** that offers an Apprenticeship framework to suit your business. The training providers across Wales work with businesses to deliver high quality work-based learning programmes; they'll handle your apprentices' training, qualification and assessment.
- 3. Advertise your Apprenticeship vacancy** through the Apprenticeship Matching Service on www.careerswales.com. This is the official online recruitment system for apprenticeships in Wales and can help you find an apprentice that is right for your business. Employers are able to review applications, sift for short-listing and invite candidates for interview.
- 4. Negotiate a salary** that will reflect the skills and experience of the individual. You may also be required to contribute towards some of the training costs.

For further advice, guidance and support, visit www.businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/skills-and-training-programmes/apprenticeships or call us on 03000 6 03000.

Support for future, current and potential apprentices meanwhile can be found on www.gov.wales/apprenticeshipswales