

# Health and Social Care Employer Guide

## Apprenticeships in Primary Care - Sussex & East Surrey Sustainability and Transformation Partnership

### What is an apprenticeship?

Applicable for your existing primary care workforce or for new workforce recruited specifically onto primary care apprenticeships, an apprenticeship is a genuine job with an accompanying assessment and skills development programme. It is a way for staff to earn while they learn gaining valuable skills and knowledge in a specific job role. The apprentice gains this through a wide mix of learning in the workplace, formal off-the-job training and the opportunity to practise new skills in a real work environment. The apprentice is then assessed at the end and the result is graded.

### How do they work?

Apprentices must spend at least [20% of their time on off-the-job training](#), the GP practice and training provider will decide how the off the-job training is delivered. It may include regular day release, block release and special training days or workshops and can be delivered in the apprentice’s place of work or at the training provider’s site. The [off-the-job can cover](#) practical training such as shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and attending competitions. An [off-the-job recording sheet can be found here](#) and [an off-the-job calculator can be found here](#).

On-the-job also training helps an apprentice develop the specific skills for the workplace and they should be supported by a mentor.

Once an apprentice completes their apprenticeship, they should be able to demonstrate that they can perform tasks confidently and completely to the standard set by the health and social care sector. This is ensured by the end-point assessment which, for most apprenticeships, are carried out by an organisation independent to the one which trained the apprentice.

### Apprenticeship levels

There are various levels of apprenticeship available:

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes
Advanced	3	2 A level passes
Higher	4 and 5	Foundation degree
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor’s or Master’s degree

### Support for English and maths training

English and maths are essential to supporting longer-term career prospects, therefore [functional skills](#) form part of all apprenticeships, although learners who already have obtained the level required by the specific apprenticeship will be exempt from undertaking them.

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## Who are they for?

GP practices can offer apprenticeships to new entrants or use them to grow talent from among current employees. The minimum age is 16 year and there is no maximum age.

Apprenticeships equip individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviour they need for specific job roles in the health and social care sector.

## Benefits of apprentices

Hiring an apprentice or supporting your primary care workforce through apprenticeships is a productive and effective way for any business to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Employers with established apprenticeship programmes have reported that productivity in their workplace had improved by 76% whilst 75% reported that apprenticeships improved the quality of their product or service.

Other [benefits of apprenticeships](#) include:

- increasing employee satisfaction;
- reducing staff turnover;
- reducing recruitment costs.

## Mentoring

Mentoring is an important part of an apprenticeship and can provide much needed additional support to an apprentice, helping them understand their role in the GP practice, develop their career path, and provide a listening ear if they're facing any problems and challenges.

Mentoring helps people to learn and develop. Mentoring therefore has the potential to make a valuable contribution to apprentices in terms of their personal and professional development and to the overall development of the organisation.

Benefits for the apprentice can include:

- Increased confidence/self-esteem
- Increased sense of value within the GP practice
- Additional help and support
- Safe learning environment (can be open about vulnerabilities)
- Increased understanding of the GP practice
- Focus on specific skills through coaching from the mentor
- Ideas about career opportunities within the practice

The benefits are not all one way. Mentors too can gain a sense of value within the GP practice as well as satisfaction from passing on their skills and wisdom; also greater understanding of the GP practice and its issues and problems, as well as improving one-to-one communication skills, coaching skills and management skills.

The mentor relationship provides additional support, guidance and pastoral care, which is outside the more formal line management relationship.

Mentors can help a new apprentice orientate into the workplace, provide information, advice and guidance relating to the learning and training aspects of the apprenticeship, and work with the apprentice to ensure that problems are resolved quickly and do not threaten the apprenticeship.

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The mentor is not there to replace the apprentice's line manager, instead they will provide an additional supportive resource.

### What apprenticeships are available and relevant to primary care?

There are a wide range of apprenticeships appropriate for all level of roles within primary care, both clinical and non-clinical. These include:

- Healthcare Support Worker - level 2;
- Senior Healthcare Support Worker - level 3 (pathways include Adult Nursing, Mental Health, Children and Young people, Allied Health professions – Therapies);
- Assistant Healthcare Practitioner - level 5;
- Nursing Associate - level 5;
- Registered Nurse - level 6;
- Physiotherapist - level 6;
- Advanced Clinical Practitioner - level 7;
- Business Administrator - level 3;
- Team Leader/Supervisor - level 3;
- Operations/Department Manager - level 5;
- Chartered Manager - level 6;
- Senior Leader - level 7.

Further apprenticeships are currently in development, a full range of apprenticeships available and in development can be found on the [Institute for Apprenticeships website](#).

### Employer responsibilities

There must be a genuine job available with a contract of employment long enough for an apprentice to complete their apprenticeship. GP practices must pay an apprentice's wages and the role must help them gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to achieve the apprenticeship with support from the practice.

The GP practice must select a training provider who is on the [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#) and agree a total price for the cost of training and assessment. Suitable registered training providers and employer satisfaction ratings can be found via the [Find Apprenticeship Training](#) tool. For an apprenticeship standard, this should include the cost of the end-point assessment which must be agreed with the provider selected from the [Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations](#).

As the employer, the GP practice will need to have:

- An [apprenticeship agreement](#) in place with their apprentice for the duration of the apprenticeship.
- a [commitment statement](#) signed by the apprentice, the practice and the provider.
- a written agreement with the training provider(s) - for employers who pay the apprenticeship levy and use the [apprenticeship service](#), they will need to have a contract for services with their main provider
- the apprentice on at least [the correct wage for their age](#), for the time they are in work, in off-the-job training and doing further study

The above links will provide guidance to support employer HR policies.

### Finding the right training provider

When looking for a training provider you should consider:

- Does the provider's organisational culture & values match yours?

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- How do you want the training tailored to your business need?
- Do you want the training on a local or national scale?
- How will they deliver it and when can they start?
- If delivery is at the training provider's premises is the travel feasible for your candidates?
- Who can best deliver this - a college, private provider or HE institution?

What does good look like - quality?

- Check provider satisfaction ratings, achievement rates and Ofsted rating on [Find Apprenticeship Training](#).
- Visit them to check out their facilities & speak to their trainers.
- Ask to speak to some current apprentices - are they passionate about what they are learning?

Insist on value for money:

- Remember apprenticeships should be employer led, you are the client
- Shop around & get a quote for what you need, the price is negotiable
- Check they offer the new employer-led apprenticeship [standards](#) rather than the old frameworks where available
- If you are doing a standard, choose the right end-point assessor for you - remember to make sure that it's included in the price

### The apprenticeship levy

Generally GP practices are not large enough organisations to pay the apprenticeship levy but there may be some that are now or in the future. If you're an employer with a pay bill over £3 million a year, you must pay the apprenticeship levy from 6 April 2017. Read [guidance on how to pay the apprenticeship levy](#). You will report and pay your levy to HMRC through the PAYE process.

An employer's pay bill is made up of the total amount of the employees' earnings that are subject to Class 1 National Insurance contributions, such as:

- Wages;
- Bonuses;
- Commissions;
- Pension contributions.

The government will top up employers' levy with an extra 10%, paid directly to employers' apprenticeship accounts.

### What about non-levy-paying employers?

This is the where most if not all GP practices will sit; GP practices with a pay bill of less than £3 million a year will not need to pay the levy, instead the Government co-invests with non-levy paying employers. The government will ask these employers to make a 5% cash contribution to the cost, paid directly to the provider, and the government covers the rest (up to the [maximum agreed funding band](#)).

All apprenticeships have funding bands - If you agree a price with your training provider which falls within the specified band the **government will fund 95%** of the course fees. The remaining **5% will be paid by the GP practice** at a monthly rate for the duration of the apprenticeship. Anything over the specified cap will have to be paid by the GP practice.

For employers with less than 50 staff, the **government will 100% fund apprentices aged 16-18 years old** and 19-24 years old who were formerly in care or who have an Education and Health Care plan and **the GP practice will receive £1000**.

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## Transfer of levy – opportunities for levy and non-levy employers

Levy-paying employers can transfer up to a maximum of 25% of the value of their annual levy fund to any other employer. Transferred funds are used to pay for the training and assessment cost of apprenticeships.

Transfers are managed through the apprenticeship service, with payments made monthly from the sending employer account into the receiving employer account. A GP practice wishing to receive and use any transferred funds must register and set up an account with the apprenticeship service and have a signed agreement with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

For further information specific to the transfer of levy in primary care please see the separate information sheet - *Apprenticeship Levy Transfer – NHS Trust to GP Practice*

## Additional payments and funding support

Employers are not required to pay National Insurance Contributions for apprentices under the age of 25 on earnings below the higher tax rate of £827 a week (£43,000 a year).

## The apprenticeship service

Through the apprenticeship service on GOV.UK, levy employers can plan and manage their apprenticeship programme, giving them greater control over their apprenticeships and account funds.

The apprenticeship service is made up of the following:

- 'Estimate my apprenticeship funding' allows employers to calculate whether they will pay the apprenticeship levy or not, and how much they will have available to spend on apprenticeships. It also shows all employers how much the government will contribute towards the cost of training.
- [Find apprenticeship training](#) gives employers easy-to-digest information on the choices available to them. They can easily search for and find a standard, framework and training provider, and compare one provider with another.
- 'Recruit an apprentice' is a new platform through which training providers can post vacancies and manage applications for apprenticeships and traineeships. This will be opened up to employers at a later date.
- [Find an apprenticeship](#) and [Find a traineeship](#) are the recruitment sites that enable employers to advertise their vacancies for free and find candidates who match their criteria.
- 'Manage apprenticeships' allows registered levy-paying employers to view their account balance, manage their apprentices and approve funds to pay for their apprenticeship training.

## Further information

There are links throughout this information document where you can find further specific information to support you with apprenticeships. Much of this information can also be found within the Health Education England sponsored [Skills for Health 'Healthcare Apprenticeship Standards On-line'](#) web pages where there are further apprenticeship resources including a [specific primary care information pack](#).

To discuss how you could embed apprenticeships within your business please contact the specific apprenticeship lead at your CCG.