**Apprenticeships** 

*PLEASE NOTE – The main website for comprehensive information on all aspects of apprenticeships is the National Apprenticeship Service:* [*www.apprenticeships.org.uk*](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

**Overview**

An apprenticeship is a real job with training so you can earn while you learn and pick up recognised qualifications as you go. An apprentice works alongside experienced staff, earns a wage, gains job-specific knowledge and skills and studies towards a related qualification. They cover 1,500 job roles in a wide range of industries, from things like engineering to financial advice, veterinary nursing to accountancy.

Apprenticeships take between 1 and 4 years to complete depending on their level. Different apprenticeship positions/employers/careers may ask for different qualifications from A Levels to C's at GCSE to no formal qualifications at all. There are 3 levels of apprenticeships in England:

* **Intermediate [Level 2]** – equivalent to 5 GCSE passes. Includes work-based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 2, Key Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge based certificate such as a BTEC Level 2.
* **Advanced [Level 3]** – equivalent to 2 A level passes. Includes work-based qualifications such as an NVQ Level 3 and a relevant knowledge based certificate such as a BTEC Level 3. To start this programme, the applicant should ideally have five GCSEs (grade C or above) however, some applicants will have achieved A/AS Levels.
* **Higher [Level 4 and above]** - Work towards work-based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 4 and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation degree. Some apprentices can also progress to higher education, including university degrees.

There are two main training models for apprenticeships. For ‘day release’ programmes, apprentices usually work 4 days a week in a job with 1 day a week at college or a training centre (or may be provided in-house in some organisations). An alternative ‘block release’ arrangement may be working for a 4-8 week block followed by a 1-2 week block of training.

Anyone in England can apply for an apprenticeship if they’re 16 or over, eligible to work in England and not in full-time education.

**Pay and holidays**

Apprentices are paid from the first day of their apprenticeship and they’re entitled to the National Minimum Wage. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice is £2.65 per hour. This rate applies to apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. Apprentices aged 19 or over who have completed their first year must be paid at least the minimum wage rate for their age.

Apprentices must be paid for their normal working hours (minimum 30 hours per week) and any training that is part of the apprenticeship (usually 1 day per week). Apprentices get at least 20 days of paid holiday per year, plus bank holidays.

**Finding and applying for an apprenticeship**

There are a number of things you can do to try and find an apprenticeship position:

1. Register on the National Apprenticeship Service website ([www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)), which is where many employers will advertise their apprenticeship vacancies. You can then search and apply for local apprenticeships through this website.
2. Register with any training providers in your occupational area of interest – they may be able to help you find an employer. See table below for some of the key training providers and their area of expertise.
3. Register with local colleges – they will be able to provide the training part of your apprenticeship and may be able to help you with finding an employer.
4. Check websites of larger companies you are interested in (some only advertise on their own websites).
5. Ask your friends, family and people you know for any potential apprenticeship opportunities they may have or be aware of.
6. Try and find an employer yourself by speculatively approaching local companies in your area of interest. You can use the Yellow Pages online ([www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com)) to identify companies. Then send a copy of your CV along with a covering letter explaining that you are looking for an apprenticeship. Follow up with a phone call 1-2 weeks later if you have not heard anything.

**It is always a good idea to have a back up plan in place (e.g. college or 6th form course place) as it is not guaranteed that you will secure an apprenticeship (very competitive for places).**

**Examples of training providers:**

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| **Training Provider** | **Vocational Areas examples** | **Web Address** |
| Babcock International | Defence, Rail, Nuclear, Infrastructure | <http://www.babcockinternational.com/careers/apprentices/>  |
| BEST | Building, Engineering, Plumbing, Electrical | [www.best-ltd.co.uk/employers/training-programme/apprenticeships.html](http://www.best-ltd.co.uk/employers/training-programme/apprenticeships.html)  |
| Carillion | Building & Construction | <http://www.carillionplc.com/construction-apprenticeships.aspx>  |
| CITB | Building & Construction | <http://www.bconstructive.co.uk/>  |
| Haddon | Animal Care, Land-based & Transport | [www.haddontraining.co.uk](http://www.haddontraining.co.uk/)  |
| JTL  | Electrical, Plumbing & Engineering | <http://www.jtltraining.com/>  |
| Paragon | Administration, Care, Warehousing, Engineering & Technology, Hairdressing, Hospitality, Marine, Motor, Retail | [www.paragonskills.co.uk](http://www.paragonskills.co.uk/)  |
| First 4 Skills | Business & Administration, [Warehousing & Storage](http://www.protocol-skills.co.uk/pages/qualifications/distribution), Hairdressing , [Hospitality](http://www.protocol-skills.co.uk/pages/qualifications/hospitality), [Management](http://www.protocol-skills.co.uk/pages/qualifications/management) ,[Retail](http://www.protocol-skills.co.uk/pages/qualifications/retail), [Health & Social Care](http://www.protocol-skills.co.uk/pages/qualifications/health-and-social-care) | [www.first4skills.com](http://www.first4skills.com/) |
| Reflections | Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy | [www.reflectionstraining.co.uk/courses.htm](http://www.reflectionstraining.co.uk/courses.html)  |
| ReMIT | [Automotive](http://www.remit.co.uk/automotive_training), [Automotive Technical](http://www.remit.co.uk/technical_training), [Food & Hospitality](http://www.remit.co.uk/food_hospitality_training) and [Beauty & Hair](http://www.remit.co.uk/beauty_hair_training). | [www.remit.co.uk](http://www.remit.co.uk)  |
| Rotork | Electrical & Electrical Engineering | <http://www.rotork.com/en/careers/index/apprenticescheme>  |
| S&B | Motor Vehicle | [www.sandbaa.com/apprenticeships.html](http://www.sandbaa.com/apprenticeships.html)  |
| Smart | Hospitality, Business, Retail | [www.smarttar.co.uk/learners/apprenticeships](http://www.smarttar.co.uk/learners/apprenticeships)  |
| YMCA | Early Years, Health & Social Care | [www.ymcatraining.org.uk](http://www.ymcatraining.org.uk)  |