



# Apprenticeships: an employers' guide



THE **CHARTERED BODY** FOR THE  
PROJECT PROFESSION



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"Apprenticeships continue to provide an invaluable, accessible entry point for individuals considering a career in project management, and companies of all sizes – and from all sectors – can benefit from the Project Management Apprenticeships available."

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## Foreword

As the chartered body for the project profession, the Association for Project Management (APM) is committed to attracting and developing the best, brightest and most diverse talent for the project profession now and for the future.

With the aspiration to live in a world where all projects succeed, we must ensure that project management becomes a career of first choice to meet contemporary economic and societal challenges. Building upon the success of last year's guide we want to continue to help employers recruit and retain the next generation of project professionals from as wide a background as possible.

Apprenticeships continue to provide an invaluable, accessible entry point for individuals considering a career in project management, and companies of all sizes – and from all sectors – can benefit from the project management apprenticeships available. The purpose of this updated guide is to be both a useful resource for employers navigating the apprenticeship levy, while providing an update on the forthcoming Level 6 integrated degree apprenticeship. It also provides information about how to make the best use of the resources available from APM.

As well as attracting a more diverse workforce, apprenticeships provide a way to recruit and retain individuals who are more likely to remain with the organisation for longer, giving you a greater return on your investment in training. For apprentices, they provide a route to acquiring relevant skills and experience for a successful career, and an equally valid route to traditional academic routes. At the heart of apprenticeships in project management is the APM Project Management Qualification (PMQ) which apprentices study for as part of their programme. This qualification is a recognised mark of quality both in the UK and internationally. It is also part of a clear career pathway for apprentices to work towards achieving Chartered status, creating a talent pipeline of qualified and experienced project professionals.

With two project management apprenticeships currently available (the Associate Project Manager standard at Level 4 available in England and the Higher Apprenticeship framework at Level 4 available in Scotland and Wales), we are excited that the Level 6 Project Manager integrated degree apprenticeship will be fully operational later in 2018.

As we approach a year since the apprenticeship levy and Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) went live, it is worth reflecting upon the intended purpose of the apprenticeship reforms: to increase apprentice numbers and to expand the number of businesses using this training route. Understandably, any systemic change of the complexity and size of that taking place in England's skills system in particular, faces challenges. However, the encouraging news is that initial projections show that, against the current national trend over the last year, the number of project management apprenticeships is increasing.

APM stands ready to support employers and apprentices to develop the next stage of apprenticeships in building a career path into project management.

**John McGlynn**  
Chair, APM

## Introduction

This refreshed and updated guide serves as a *useful resource* for employers navigating the apprenticeship levy, while also providing information about how to make the best use of the resources available from APM.

As with the original guide, this document begins by exploring the value of apprenticeships to the project profession as well as APM's involvement with the development of the *Associate Project Manager* standard at Level 4 (England) and the Level 6 Project Manager integrated degree apprenticeship. The guide also provides information on various valuable resources available to employers.

## Apprenticeships and project management

Apprenticeships have been enjoying an increased profile across project management and related professions, as companies of all sizes and from all sectors realise the benefits they bring and the part they play in a multi-faceted recruitment approach.

Apprenticeships are a key component of our profession's drive to attract new talent – providing an accessible entry point and encouraging those who might never have considered a career in project management in the past. Apprenticeships also set individuals on the professional qualifications pathway – providing a sound base for a successful career.

Higher Apprenticeships have been available since 2012 and there have been more than 1300 starts since then. While this has been replaced in England by the Level 4 Trailblazer standard, the Higher Apprenticeship in Project Management is still available in Scotland and Wales. Evidence emerging at the end of 2017 suggests that project management apprenticeships are on an upward curve – quite in contrast to the reported dip in apprenticeship starts more generally.

The project profession was an early adopter of the government's shift to employers designing new apprenticeship standards as part of employer Trailblazer groups. APM has been part of the Project Management Trailblazer Employer Development Group (EDG) since its inception – a pan-sector, employer-led group comprising a mix of large companies, SMEs and training providers. This group has developed the Level 4 Associate Project Manager Trailblazer standard, which replaced the Higher Apprenticeship in England in January 2017. In November 2016, APM CEO Sara Drake launched the Level 4 Trailblazer apprenticeship at an event in the House of Commons, hosted by Sellafield.

## New in 2018

The Level 6 Project Manager integrated degree apprenticeship will be fully operational later in 2018 and will typically last for 48 months – after which time apprentices will achieve either a BA or BSc Honours degree in Project Management.

This new and exciting standard has been led by Sellafield and will provide 20% off-the-job training alongside a part-time degree at a university. The standard also includes the APM's Project Management Qualification (PMQ).

**Employers involved in creating the standard:** Sellafield, Academy for Project Management, Arup, Aviva, BAE Systems, Balfour Beatty, the British Broadcasting Corporation, British Airways, British Telecom, the Department for Work and Pensions, EDF Energy, Infrastructure and Projects Authority, Lloyds Banking Group, HS2, N:gaged, Network Rail, Ordnance Survey, Rolls Royce, Royal Mail, Transport for Greater Manchester, Transport for London, Turner & Townsend, Thales, and William Grant & Sons Distillers.

The Treasury's Project Management Growth Action Plan recognised the role apprenticeships will play in the future of our profession and employers value the contribution of a chartered professional body in this context. As more employers look to understand more about how they can develop their new and existing workforce and apprenticeships increase within our profession, we want to support this with a published guidance document which aims to provide assistance to businesses operating in our sector, highlighting the value of apprenticeships and suggesting how best to utilise them.

Central to apprenticeships in project management are professional qualifications with each apprenticeship including a full professional qualification [see above]. The Associate Project Manager apprenticeship includes the APM Project Management Qualification (PMQ) – chosen by employers because it is widely recognised by Project Management recruiters, both in the UK and Internationally.



## What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes lasting at least 12 months. They allow apprentices to combine employment and training – earning and learning – providing both on and off-the-job (20%) training. In addition to delivering transferable skills and competency in English and maths, apprenticeships lead to full competency and capability in an occupation, demonstrated by achievement of an apprenticeship standard.

## Benefits of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are valuable both for the apprentice and for the employer: for employers, apprenticeships provide a way to recruit and retain individuals who are more likely to remain with the organisation for longer. This allows employers to create a more diverse workforce whilst realising a greater return on investment in training. For apprentices, they provide a route to acquiring relevant skills – earning and learning – whilst providing experience and helping to form attitudes and behaviours necessary for a successful career in the given profession. Data from the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) shows that for every £1 that is spent on apprenticeships, the national economy gains £21.

Training providers (Private providers, colleges or universities) may help to take the stress out of the setup process, and how to access all the available funding. Apprenticeships are available in 17,000 occupations across 170 sectors, including project management.

# How are apprenticeships changing?

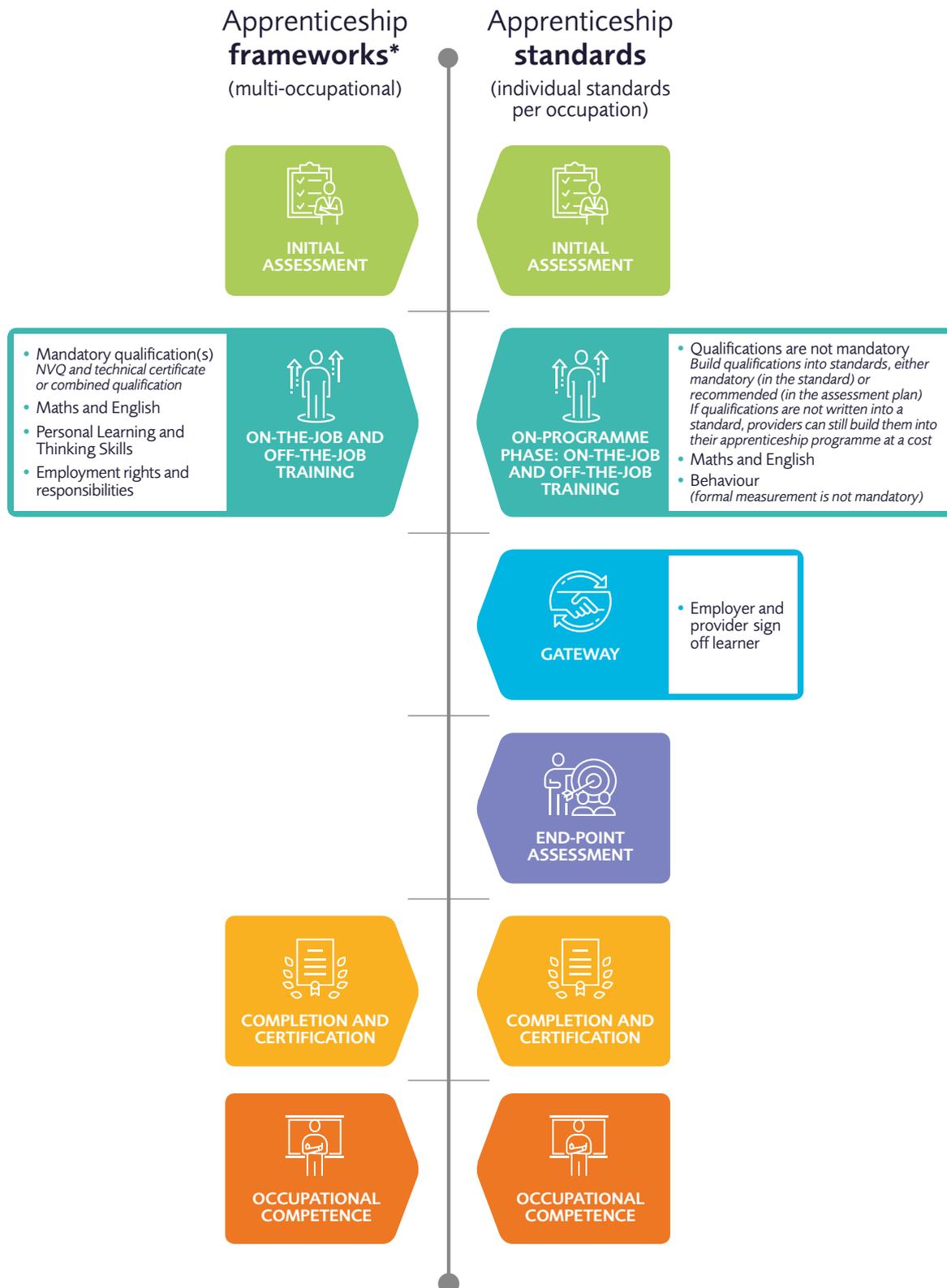
## The road to quality – changing perceptions

An independent review of apprenticeships conducted in 2012 argued for a redefinition of apprenticeships in order to “focus where they can add most value, to strengthen the brand, and to raise our level of ambition.” The review recommended a sharper emphasis on quality and rigour – so that training was both trusted and transferable – whilst emphasising that at their core apprenticeships must be about the relationship between an employer and an apprentice. In addition to challenging government to put employers at the very heart of the system's design and delivery, it recommended that government should focus on outcomes, or what apprentices do at the end of their apprenticeships.

The government moved to protect the term “apprenticeship” in the Enterprise Act 2016 making it an offence for any person, business, or training provider, to provide or offer a course or training as an apprenticeship if it is not a statutory apprenticeship (where a statutory apprenticeship is an “approved English apprenticeship” [standard or framework] and an apprenticeship agreement is in place between an employer and an apprentice).

Following the 2012 review, the government moved to create Trailblazers – or groups of employers working together to design new apprenticeship standards and assessment criteria for occupations within their sectors. These standards will replace all existing ‘frameworks’ by 2020. The new apprenticeship standards are short (one/two pages), accessible documents, describing the level of knowledge, skill, and behaviours required to do a particular role well i.e. describing full competence for the role. All new standards have to relate to a specific role or occupation (e.g. Associate Project Manager) and provide a career development pathway within the sector.

# Moving from frameworks to standards



\*Funding for SASE frameworks will end by 2020 though this date may change

## Apprenticeship funding

In his Summer Budget in July 2015, then chancellor, George Osborne, announced the introduction of a levy to fund 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020. The introduction of a levy fundamentally altered the UK's approach to skills funding. This policy intervention sought to address the perception that firms' investment in talent is "on a downward trend" and was to form a key pillar of the government's Productivity Plan entitled "Fixing the foundations: creating a more prosperous nation" which was published immediately after the Budget. A consultation was then launched regarding the apprenticeship levy before the government announced the rate and scope of the levy in its joint Autumn Statement/Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015.

## The levy

### Who pays the levy – and how much will it be?

Employers in all parts of the UK are now required to pay a levy of 0.5% of their annual pay bill exceeding £3million (pay bill defined as total employee earnings subject to class 1 secondary NICs).

An allowance of £15,000 means that only those employers with an annual pay bill of over £3 million will have to pay and report the levy (as this allowance eliminates a levy liability up to a pay bill of £3million). A pay bill of less than £3million may attract a levy liability where an employer operates multiple payrolls/has more than one HMRC reference/is a connected company or charity, as only one allowance is available.

### How do employers report their levy?

Employers report their levy liability monthly on the Employer Payment Summary (EPS), as they do other PAYE liabilities.

### How is the levy collected?

The levy is collected monthly by HMRC through the employer's Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and will be payable alongside income tax and national insurance. Similarly, the annual allowance of £15,000 is deducted on a monthly basis (£15,000 divided by 12 months).

### How do employers access their levy funds?

Once employers have declared the levy to HMRC they will be able to access funding for English apprenticeships through their account with the Apprenticeship Service (AS).

## What else does the Apprenticeship Service enable employers to do?

Through the AS, employers are able to:

- select an apprenticeship framework or standard
- choose the training provider or providers to deliver the training
- choose the organisation that will assess apprentices
- access and post apprenticeship vacancies

Employers are also able to set the price they have agreed with their preferred training provider(s) as well as to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment. Importantly, should an apprentice stop training or take a break, employers will also be able to stop or pause payments through the AS.

## How much will employers be able to spend?

The amount appearing in an employer's AS account is calculated using data that HMRC already hold about the home addresses of employees, so that the value of digital vouchers will correspond to the proportion of the pay bill paid to employees living in England.

After the levy fund has been multiplied by the proportion of the employer's pay bill paid to their workforce living in England, it will then be subject to a 10% government top up to this amount.

## What happens to the levy funds paid for employees in the devolved nations?

As skills policy has been devolved, governments in each of the devolved nations receive a 'population share' of the apprenticeship levy.

The Office for Budget Responsibility's apprenticeship levy forecast showed the following:

### How can funds be spent?

Digital vouchers are valid for 24 months and can only be spent on apprenticeship training –not the wider associated costs of apprenticeships, for example apprentices' salaries. If an employer has registered to become a provider in their own right they may be able to use their levy funds more widely.

### What happens to unspent vouchers?

The apprenticeship funding system consists of 15 funding bands. Employers will be expected to negotiate a price for their apprentices' training and assessment in the knowledge that there is a maximum that government is prepared to commit from its funds for the off-the-job training and assessment for each apprenticeship.

These are the funding bands that apply to apprenticeship standards from 12 February 2018.

Band	Band upper limit/cap
1	£1,500
2	£2,000
3	£2,500
4	£3,000
5	£3,500
6	£4,000
7	£5,000
8	£6,000
9	£9,000
10	£12,000
11	£15,000
12	£18,000
13	£21,000
14	£24,000
15	£27,000

Associate Project Manager standard at Level 4 is in this band

Source: DfE Apprenticeship funding in England from May 2017



## Case study



### Wesley Robinson

Project Delivery Directorate (PDD) Training, Sellafield

#### What my role involves

Heading up the Project Delivery Directorate (PDD) Training at Sellafield, I am responsible for the project training and education of all the people within project roles at Sellafield. I must also ensure that the project training needs of the teams working on our Major Projects are met. My role includes delivery of courses through our project academy and additionally I am the programme owner for the project management apprenticeship scheme as well as the senior co-ordinator for the graduates within the project management profession.

I am accountable for all aspects of the project management apprenticeship scheme at Sellafield and work closely with the Heads of Projects and the Heads of Professions for the project functions to place the apprentices around the business and ensure they meet their competencies. I ensure that the company is getting the best benefit from the apprentice whilst also ensuring the apprentice is getting the best possible experience.

#### Project management apprenticeships at Sellafield

Our project management apprenticeship is a four-year scheme – originally built on the two-year APM Higher Apprenticeship scheme. What is special about the Sellafield scheme is that the apprentices get to move around the Integrated Project Team, spending time across project management, project controls, risk, pre-operations, commissioning and construction. This benefits the apprentices and enables us to find the best fit for both the individual and the company.

Nine Sellafield apprentices recently undertook and passed the end-point assessment which involved a portfolio of work and an interview with the Heads of Profession for Project Management and Project Controls. In line with national best practice they were assessed against the Associate Project Manager Trailblazer competencies. These are all fundamental to being a project manager and not specific to the nuclear industry; it is important to know that any of our apprentices are able to work as a project professional within any industry.

All of our project management apprentices are now on the Level 4 Associate Project Manager scheme from day one. Sellafield led the development of the apprenticeship, working closely with over 40 other companies, universities, training providers and the APM. Sellafield had one of the first cohorts of apprentices on the new Trailblazer scheme and recently all 10 completed their on-programme assessment of the PMQ, with a 100 per cent pass rate and one apprentice in particular achieving 90 per cent.

“The project man  
at Sellafield has  
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wanting to keep them



management apprenticeship scheme now entered its fifth year and the quality of the apprentices means that more project delivery teams are requesting them as a resource and wanting to keep them – which is very satisfying to see."

### **What are the benefits of a project management apprenticeship to the business?**

Sellafield is the largest employer in our area and is a huge supporter of apprenticeships, with schemes ranging from electrical and mechanical craft apprenticeships to specialist nuclear apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships.

The project management apprenticeship scheme at Sellafield has now entered its fifth year and the quality of the apprentices means that more project delivery teams are requesting them as a resource and wanting to keep them – which is very satisfying to see.

As Sellafield now moves from a reprocessing company into decommissioning, our project functions are dealing with the cultural issues of reskilling the resource from these facilities and are using a nationally agreed Trailblazer standard to help develop them into a competent project management resource. We have a one hundred year programme of work at Sellafield and ongoing apprenticeships are essential to us completing our mission safely and securely.

Like me, our Projects Director Ian Marr started out as an apprentice and so he appreciates the importance of a good-quality apprenticeship and what it can do for you in giving you a good foundation for a career. Ian has always met with every project apprentice within the first week of them starting with the company and it is inspiring for them to see that you can progress from an apprentice to a member of the executive team.

Sellafield is the lead employer on the Project Management Employer Development Group (EDG) for Trailblazer apprenticeships, with Wes chairing the group. The EDG is developing the apprenticeship standards for project management on behalf of HM Government.

# What employers need to know

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## Step 1 – Identify the need

Before recruiting an apprentice it is important to evaluate the talent needs of your business. This should be linked to your organisation's existing people strategy. Having undertaken this evaluation, you should identify a clearly-defined role within your business for them. It could be that you are looking to develop an existing member of staff or that you see a future need which an apprentice could be trained to fill. Taking on an apprentice is a commitment that should not be entered into lightly. Once you have made the decision to hire an apprentice you will need, in most cases, to find an approved training provider.

A training provider will deliver the apprenticeship at your place of work, and will work with you throughout the programme, providing regular feedback – leaving you free to focus on your core business. Training providers will be able to assist you with managing the apprenticeship funding process. Providers will also support you with recruitment, developing training plans and programme evaluation (see below).



## Step 2 – Recruit and enrol

There are a number of ways of recruiting an apprentice and how you do this will depend on the age of the apprentice you are looking to recruit.

You could:

- Advertise and recruit in the same way you would any employee – for example using your company website or local media, or a specialist recruitment company and a formal selection process. Some employers include the training provider in this process, as they have experience and insight of knowing what makes a good apprentice. An increasing number of employers are recruiting apprentices in September/October following the publication of exam results.
- Liaise with National Apprenticeship Service and utilise their vacancy matching service. Email [nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk) or telephone free on **0800 015 0400**
- Use the APM's **job board**
- Recruit directly from schools/colleges. This is helpful if you have developed a good relationship with a particular institution.

When looking to recruit a younger apprentice (16–18) you should remember that they will have little, if any, work experience and so this should be a consideration when designing your recruitment process. In some cases extra financial support is available to employers taking on a 16-18 year old apprentice (see annexe).

Once you have made your recruitment decision, apprentices will have a formal contract of employment that should reflect the fixed term nature of the apprenticeship

There is a national minimum wage (NMW) for apprentices, though many employers choose to pay their apprentices more than this.



### Step 3 – Induct

Apprentices should receive a full and comprehensive induction – as you would give any new member of staff. Introducing them to their new colleagues helps an apprentice feel part of their new team. A discussion about expectations, their role within the company and learning objectives should be at the heart of the induction so that the apprentice has a clear understanding of what to expect. Finally, the induction plays a role in providing the apprentice with a good impression of their new employer and a chance to understand the structure, values and culture of the company.



### Step 4 – Develop and manage

For all parties to receive maximum benefit from the programme, you as the employer will need to provide the relevant support mechanisms. In the case of apprentices already with your company, this will be substantially less than a new joiner. In addition to the support from the training provider on the programme, apprentices should have clear work plans and should receive ongoing feedback and coaching from their manager. They are there to learn and gain the skills to succeed within our profession and so the tasks they undertake should reflect this. They have made a big commitment in undertaking the apprenticeship and it is your responsibility as an employer to support them. An apprenticeship is a professional development programme and the role should reflect this. As well as a manager/mentor who has responsibility for the apprentice, you should also consider assigning a buddy to them. This person could be junior to the manager and able to offer informal support and help. Having a buddy and mentor system offers an opportunity to develop management skills of other staff.



### Step 5 – Feedback and evaluate

It is good practice to hold regular feedback sessions with the apprentice and the training provider. Apprenticeships are a collaborative learning process and companies should always take the time to review progress and make any required improvements.



### Step 6 – What happens next?

The majority of those completing an apprenticeship remain with their employer – repaying the investment of time and money as well as becoming a committed member of staff. The end of an apprenticeship does not signal the end of that individual's development.

## Contact APM's Apprenticeship Unit

APM's dedicated Apprenticeship Unit has been operational for one year now. Answering queries pertaining to the levy and about apprenticeships more generally, expert advice is on hand via [apprenticeships@apm.org.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@apm.org.uk)

## Useful links

### **APM Apprenticeships**

[apm.org.uk/qualifications-and-training/apprenticeships/](http://apm.org.uk/qualifications-and-training/apprenticeships/)

### **The National Apprenticeship Service**

Apprenticeships work for people of all ages and backgrounds and can transform lives. Apprentices gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, in some cases up to degree level, while working and earning.

The National Apprenticeship Service supports the delivery of apprenticeships in England. It offers free impartial advice and support to employers looking to recruit for the first time or expand their apprenticeship programmes. This includes simplifying the process of recruiting an apprentice through the support of employer focused teams. Through the Find an apprenticeship site on GOV.UK employers can advertise their vacancies and potential apprentices can apply.

Call **0800 015 0600** or search for apprenticeships on **GOV.UK** to find out more.

### **Apprenticeships – ESFA General Information and Guidance**

[gov.uk/education/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-internships#general-information-and-guidance](http://gov.uk/education/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-internships#general-information-and-guidance)

### **Institute for Apprenticeships**

[gov.uk/government/organisations/institute-for-apprenticeships](http://gov.uk/government/organisations/institute-for-apprenticeships)

### **Apprenticeship Funding**

[gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work](http://gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work)

### **Apprenticeship Service**

[gov.uk/guidance/manage-apprenticeship-funds](http://gov.uk/guidance/manage-apprenticeship-funds)

## Case study

### Apprenticeships at Lloyds Banking Group

New technologies are changing the way we do business at Lloyds Banking Group (LBG) and it's an exciting time to be part of our transforming industry. We're looking for versatile, curious and courageous apprentices to test new ways of doing things and manage large-scale projects that will help shape our organisation, now and in the future.

In addition to the work they do as part of their schemes, apprentices have access to professional qualifications, career development tools, a great support network of line managers and mentors, and chances to get involved in initiatives that give back to communities.

The breadth and scale of LBG enables apprentices to gain exposure to a broad variety of teams and areas. They work within their teams and across teams during their programmes – working with graduates, other apprentices, managers, and leaders. Apprentices receive a tailored induction into their scheme and their business areas and have a monthly check-in with their coach and line manager to ensure the standards are mapped into the role and they have a clear action plan. The coach will also support them in the preparation of exam, portfolio and assessment preparation. Apprentices are part of a community of apprentices who regularly network and support each other over the course of the programme.

We have millions of customers and multiple iconic brands, and the sheer scale of our business means there are many paths to personal and professional success for an apprentice. Apprentices on our scheme may choose to continue on to a higher level of apprenticeship or may continue to work within their business area or another area. At LBG we encourage apprentices to pursue their interests and to build a rewarding career with us that matches their individual career aspirations.

### The benefit of apprenticeships to LBG

Apprentices bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the organisation, indeed the most important benefit of having Apprentices is their ability to question, challenge, adapt and push boundaries in their business areas. We find that they have exceptional levels of engagement.

Apprenticeship programmes are a fantastic offering whether for internal or external colleagues. We can demonstrate that apprentices are more engaged, perform better and are more likely to get promoted than their non-apprentice peers. We also see a reduction in sickness levels and first year voluntary turnover.

The Project Management Trailblazer apprenticeship has enabled us to attract high quality apprentices. This is down to great collaboration between different organisations in order to shape the Trailblazer programme.

We wanted to ensure that colleagues had the opportunity to build their project management skills, competence and behaviours to be successful in this area. Upon successful completion of the scheme apprentices will achieve the Level 4 Project Management Standard and APM Project Management Qualification.

Lloyds Banking Group made a commitment as part of its Helping Britain Prosper plan to have 8,000 apprentices by 2020.

Anyone, at any age and any stage of their career can become an apprentice at Lloyds Banking Group. Apprenticeships are a great opportunity for schools leavers, for those who want to develop, or to make a career change.

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