

# BSW Apprenticeship Myth Busting

## What is an apprenticeship?

- ❖ An apprenticeship is **an opportunity to work and study at the same time.**
- ❖ Most of the apprentices time is spent **on-the-job with learning taking place**, and the rest is spent working towards a **qualification.**
- ❖ Apprentices get paid a **salary** and are part of a team, just like all other employees, but you'll also get **dedicated study time.**

- **Myth: apprenticeships are expensive**

Apprentices are a cost-effective way to hire and train staff. Research shows businesses typically receive a bottom-line boost of about £2,000 every time they hire an apprentice (after wages/training costs). Plus, a typical SME can **get up to 100% of their training costs funded.**

It also helps that recruiting is usually simpler than hiring a regular employee.

- **Myth: employers have to spend time 'babysitting' apprentices**

Looking after an apprentice might be daunting, but it's no different to usual line management.

The training provider is paid to take the pain out of running apprenticeships, including paperwork, pastoral care and helping apprentices record their evidence. Ultimately, they'll help you throughout as it's in their interest that the apprenticeship works.

- **Myth: the off-the-job training (OTJT) has to be delivered externally**

Apprentices are required to spend some of their week on education such as theory or writing assignments. But this doesn't mean they have to spend all of their OTJT away from the workplace. Off-the-job training can be delivered at an apprentice's workplace it can include induction, Care certificate etc

- **Myth: employers have to document off-the-job training**

Don't worry, often the training provider documents the apprentice's off-the-job training, so the employer doesn't have to.

- **Myth: the employer has to pay into the Government levy**

You'll only pay into the Government's levy scheme **if your pay bill is over £3 million a year**, if you don't there are plenty for levy paying organisations who'd be very happy to share their levy with you and pay for your apprentices. Plus, if your annual wage bill exceeds this threshold, you almost certainly have to **pay the levy regardless** of whether or not you employ apprentices so you may as well use it!

- **Myth: Apprenticeship are only for younger people**

There is no upper age limit. In reality, people of all ages and abilities complete apprenticeships across a variety of industries. 48% of the apprenticeships started in 2022/23 were by people aged 25 and over, while 23% were aged under 19 and 29% were aged between 19 and 24.

- **Myth: apprenticeships are only for new employees**

Existing employees can be trained through apprenticeships to attain skills and recognised qualifications. It's a great way to reward current staff by increasing their skills, knowledge and confidence.

All employers can apprenticeships for current staff. There are hundreds of apprenticeship standards that can help you develop your business and the skills you need.

- **Myth: apprenticeships not as good as a degree**

This view is outdated, and the evidence proves it. Apprenticeships today are a viable alternative to academic education, covering a variety of sectors and levels.

Apprenticeship schemes can be found at a range of business big and small.

Apprentices really benefit from the programmes. Often for degree level apprenticeships, apprentices acquire professional qualifications ahead of their peers that go to university. There are loads of benefits to becoming an apprentice, including getting real-world experience you can't develop in a classroom, attracting the best who want to earn while you learn and advancing skills.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships don't really make any difference to Businesses.**

Businesses get a boost, too. Apprentices can provide better value than graduates due to their increased loyalty, enthusiasm and motivation. In fact, **85% of employers would recommend apprenticeships** to others.

- **Myth: apprenticeships don't result in full-time jobs**

Actually, 90% of apprentices stay in their workplace after finishing their apprenticeship. This demonstrates they are loyal, and that their competence is valued by employers too. Not only can an apprenticeship land a job, it can also help you **advance all the way to the top.**

- **Myth: The growth and skills levy doesn't benefit young people**

Wrong. The growth and skills levy helps fund apprenticeship training for young and older people.

To support even more businesses to offer apprenticeships to young people:

- employers do not have to pay [employer national insurance contributions](#) for apprentices aged under 25 when the apprentice earns up to £4,189 / month.
- we pay [£1,000 to both employers and training providers](#) when they take on any apprentice aged under 19, or apprentices aged 19-24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or have been in care.
- we fund 100% of the training costs for small employers (fewer than 50 staff) when they take on apprentices aged under 19.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships are not helping disadvantaged young people**

Wrong. Apprenticeships support thousands of young people without GCSE passes at school to gain the literacy and numeracy skills they need to progress to higher paid work.

- **Myth: The Government decides what Apprenticeships should cover.**

This is another myth that's easy to bust! The standards that apply to Apprenticeships are developed by industry leaders known as **Trailblazers**. This means that standards are based on what employers actually want their apprentices to know, rather than on what the Government thinks they should.

As the apprentice learns through their course and anchors that learning into their role, they are able to apply real skills to real-life working situations, based on what employers need

- **Myth: Apprenticeships don't lead to good qualifications.**

Again, this myth doesn't stand up to cross-examination. Apprenticeships come at different levels, starting at Level 2 and progressing through to Degree Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships lead to nationally-recognised qualifications, as follows:

- Level 2 is equivalent to a GCSE
- Level 3 is equivalent to an A-Level
- Levels 4, 5, 6, and 7 are equivalent to a Foundation Degree and above
- Levels 6 and 7 are equivalent to a Bachelor's or Master's Degree

An increasing number of people choose Apprenticeships over university.

At Level 4 and above, Apprenticeships can be a powerful, cost-effective way to provide professional development for existing employees, too. Workforce development apprenticeships are great for up-training and upskilling.

- **Apprenticeships are too expensive.**

In reality, quite the opposite applies. Taking on an apprentice can be a highly cost-effective way to address skill gaps or diversify into new areas. Other organisations across BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire (Local Authorities/ NHS employers, are eager to give you their levy and pay for your apprenticeships – the whole cost! Apprentices generate, on average, an early net benefit to companies of a minimum of £2,496 during their training period.

- **Myth: Apprenticeship training means a day a week away from the workplace.**

This myth falls apart easily. The rules have changed so that each apprenticeship standard now has its own unique OTJT hours per week and this can be delivered flexibly. Additionally, other types of training count towards this number, including shadowing work peers and attending online classes, mandatory training — which can be done onsite.

The type of training involved will depend on what's been agreed with the training provider or college.

- **Myth: Apprenticeship don't really help businesses**

Far from being a burden on employers, Apprenticeships can bring a host of advantages, not least in terms of bringing new, relevant skills into the company. In fact, **86% of employers say this is the case.**

The digital skills gap is real, but especially so when it comes to specialist digital and tech roles. The government recently revealed that **46% of businesses are struggling to recruit for roles that involve data skills.** Apprenticeships are a great solution to these

types of skills shortages, allowing employers to build their own future experts from the ground up. With Apprenticeships, it's possible to recruit and train a fully-fledged Data Analyst, Network Engineer, or Software Developer in just three years, while delivering tangible value to your company from the very first day.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships are for people who don't do well at school**

Apprenticeships are for everyone regardless of your academic background. They all have **different entry requirements, just like any job or traditional degree**, so it's about finding the best starting level for you.

Some apprenticeships don't need any formal qualifications at all, whereas some may ask for GCSEs, A levels or equivalent. An apprenticeship is a real job, so you'll have to satisfy the criteria the employer is looking for.

An apprenticeship is a work-based route, which can suit practical learners, or people who want to gain industry experience.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships are only available in vocational industries**

Apprenticeships are available in a range of industries and they can be a great route to get into one of your careers and support skills gaps.

- **Myth: Apprentices don't do 'real' jobs**

Remember, apprentice are employees. It's not like volunteering or doing an internship. They might be working with paying clients, treating patients on a nursing ward, or helping design new buildings, to name a few examples.

Apprentices get support from you as the employer and will have a mentor or supervisor to guide them – just like you already do with new employees. You can set objectives at the start of an apprenticeship so the apprentice knows what they'll be working towards, and this will be measured regularly.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships are badly paid**

Every apprentice must be paid a lawful wage for the time they are in work and in active learning. The employer is responsible for paying the apprentice's wages and complying with national minimum wage regulations. Like with other employees, salaries vary, but the average salary for Apprenticeship is **£26,354 per year** in the United Kingdom.

Apprenticeship wages will vary depending on each company and the role/ level.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships are only for school leavers**

There's **no upper age limit for an apprenticeship**, but they're generally suitable for anyone over the age of 16. Occasionally you need to be over 18 for some apprenticeships due to health and safety reasons, so always outline the requirements on the job description to make sure applicants fit the criteria.

Apprentices can be in their 40s or 50s and be a good fit for an apprenticeship. They can be a great opportunity for a career change later in life, especially for someone with dependants and financial commitments as you can earn and learn at the same time.

- **Myth: An apprenticeship won't lead to a career**

An apprenticeship is a **work-based route to get you into a career**. An apprenticeship can make an employee a great asset to a company as they will have lots of industry experience and skills by the time you're qualified.

Degree apprentices are sometimes sought after because they have a university degree as well as years of work experience.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships are only for the construction or trade industry**  
This is no longer the case and hasn't been for a while. There is a wide breadth of apprenticeship training available across all sectors of our workforce e.g. Finance, I.T, Business Administration, Customer Service, Management, Dental, HCA's, Nursing Associates, social work, leader carer, Occupational Therapists and Physios to name a few! New apprenticeship standards are in development all the time.
- **Myth: Apprentices only do menial or low skilled work – apprenticeships are not proper jobs**  
Apprentices follow clear training criteria and competencies which involves key tasks and play an important role within teams. Apprentices start effectively contributing to their job role from day one.
- **Myth: Apprenticeships are low-quality training options**  
The new Apprenticeship Standards launched in 2017 have been designed to improve the quality of apprenticeships and many include professional qualifications
- **Myth : 'I'm worried that if I spend time recruiting and training an apprentice, they will leave as soon as their apprenticeship is complete.'**  
Research from the National Apprenticeship Service shows that 92% of employers who employ apprentices believe that apprenticeships result in a more motivated workforce. LSE staff members have the opportunity to make a contribution to the training aspect which will positively impact overall staff retention rates.
- **Myth : 'Apprenticeship programmes are not valuable.'**  
**Not true.** Completing an apprenticeship is a great way of developing new skills in order to aid career progression. It is also a good opportunity to gain valuable on the job experience whilst studying for a qualification.
- **Myth: Apprenticeships don't lead to a full-time job.**  
Many apprentices are taken on with a permanent contract, subject to the same employment laws as non-apprentices. Those who have been engaged on a fixed term contract are usually supported into permanent employment by their employer and/or training provider.
- **Myth: The process to hire an apprentice is too timely.**  
Finding an apprentice is less work for employers as the training provider or college can do this for them. The great news is, across BSW, school and College leaver express that they'd often prefer an apprenticeship as a next career step.
- **Myth: Apprentices need experience first**  
Experience can help but having the right attitude and a willingness to learn is the most important thing to look for in the apprentices you take on. For many people, an apprenticeship provides the first opportunity to gain experience and develop workplace skills. And once an apprentice starts experience will quickly grow.

- **Myth: Apprenticeships have no value for career prospects**  
Apprenticeships are now coming the industry norm to help develop staff. As the standards for apprenticeships are developed by industry – what they learn can really help them climb the career ladder with you.
- **Myth: Not many companies recruit apprentices**  
Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy (renamed the growth and skills levy) by the government more and more companies are recruiting apprentices to be able to utilise the levy in training new staff to help reduce the skills gap. On average 250k apprentices are recruited each year in the UK.
- **Myth: Employers don't value apprenticeships**  
Research indicates that apprenticeships boost productivity to businesses by on average £214 per week so more and more employers are now choosing to grow their business through apprenticeships.  
And with employers saying that former apprentices are 15% more employable than those with other qualifications, apprenticeships are really valuable to your business.
- **Myth: Apprentices get trained, then leave the company**  
According to Department for Education research, a quarter of former apprentices (23%) secure a promotion within 12 months of qualifying. In fact, more than 90% of apprentices stay in employment after their course ends, with 71% remaining with the same employer.  
Depending on the sector and job role, an apprenticeship can take anything between one and five years to complete. This time builds loyalty!
- **Myth: Apprenticeships are a drain on business resources**  
As we've already said, apprenticeships boost productivity to businesses by an average £214 per week. They help businesses grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce which in turn leads to increased profits, lower prices and better products/ services.
- **Myth: Apprentice recruitment is difficult**  
It isn't and lots of support is available. It is up to you which training provider you use and who you recruit as your apprentice. You know your business best and are in the best position to know what will be the right fit, but lots of help is at hand via BSW and the training company you choose to guide you through all the options.
- **Myth: It difficult to find a good training provider?**  
There are 100s of training provider out there some local and some further away but offer a virtual / distance training option. The BSW network can help advise and point you in the right direction.