

Employer Engagement Policy

Purpose statement

The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to employer engagement. Employer engagement is essential in promoting apprenticeships, establishing contracting agreements and managing successful apprenticeship programmes. The ongoing commitment and working partnerships between the training provider and employer is set out within this policy in order to outline the key mechanisms of delivering well developed, employer focused apprenticeships.

ESFA regulations outlined in the funding rules identifies key requirements of this policy, ensuring there is a transparent approach and evidence to the agreement of apprenticeships between an employer and training provider. The provision is also under scope of Ofsted and therefore the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) supports the development of this policy.

Responsibility

Our Managing Director has overall responsibility for this policy however the Apprenticeship Management Team have account manager responsibilities to ensure they oversee the day to day management of the policy.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or as and when the ESFA funding rules and Ofsted CIF are revised.

Employer engagement

Promotion

Our Apprenticeship Management Team build network opportunities through different means such as networking events, FE connect forums, local and national groups, social media such as LinkedIn and twitter to engage with and promote apprenticeships and our services. Additionally, our website is updated to reflect initial Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) for employers and apprentices.

We promote the find apprenticeship training service by having links on our website, promotion through initial contact with an employer through verbal or written communication. The course directory is regularly updated to ensure the information within the find apprenticeship site is valid and up to date.

Employers will be offered the opportunity for us to recruit apprentices through apprenticeship vacancies website.

Initial employer engagement

Employers will be engaged through by different means such as partnerships, tender and bids, direct marketing and networks.

Sector specialists from the Apprenticeship Management Team will meet with employers to identify their needs and how we can support them in building apprenticeship provision within their business. Early interventions will be in place to identify if the employer is levy paying or non-levy paying as this will mean a different contract arrangement to be agreed.

It would be expected that some of the below activities will take place as part of the initial employer IAG process:

- Initial engagement meeting;
- Presentation of apprenticeship delivery;

- Providing marketing materials for employer to utilise and review;
- Tender or bid for procurement;
- Employer training needs analysis, supports a greater understanding of the employer's needs.
- Contract agreements and design.

Apprenticeship offer

Apprenticeship standards

Outlined below are the standards that we offer:

- Personal Trainer Level 3

Geographical area of delivery

Our geographical spread is linked to local and national priorities. Please see below areas of delivery below:

- Locally – Merseyside area
- Throughout the UK

Apprenticeship design

It is our aim that the apprenticeship programme delivered for employers is tailored to their needs, along with individual to the apprentice. Our approach is to design an apprenticeship programme with the employer to establish the key aspects of delivery that will suit their needs.

In supporting the apprenticeship programme, we have identified two specific employer groups that will take active roles in the apprenticeship planning and long-term management of the programme. The below groups may consist of the same individuals however the activities they undertake within the apprenticeship will be different.

- Senior employer group – contract management and apprenticeship design;
- Line manager employer group – front line support for apprentices and delivery staff.

Some of the ways we ensure a bespoke apprenticeship programme are:

- **Curriculum and module development** - Identifying specific learning outcomes that will support the individual role of the apprentice, how we will develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours as part of the standard and any wider skills required.
- **20% off the job** - Understand how 20% off the job can be delivered e.g. through block classroom-based delivery, a mixture of face to face and digital packages etc;
- **Flexibility of delivery** - Planning for the right delivery pattern e.g. apprentices have varied shift patterns and off the job training should be planned on specific days, operational peaks mean that off the job is varied by month e.g. January is a slower month so an apprentice will be given 30% however February is a peak month and therefore will only undertake 10%.
- **Accessibility** – Identifying where and how delivery can be completed face to face establishing training rooms, IT access for webinar platforms etc.
- **Additional learning support** – At this stage we will identify how we will make reasonable adjustment for learners with additional learning needs e.g. how programme length can be adjusted or additional support requirements.
- **Portfolio management** – Through discussion with the employer agreements can be made on the evidence pack arrangements and how and who will support the provider in maintaining these records. For example, line managers contributing to reviews, logging training on the off the job log.

- **EPA** – Identify options of EPA organisation and the requirements of EPA;

It is our intention to continual support the employer in the apprenticeship journey and a member of the Apprenticeship Management Team will provide ongoing coaching, mentoring and regular updates regarding their apprenticeship programme. Each employer has the ability to shape their requirements of the apprenticeship by adding specific arrangements within the commitment statement and contract of service (both will be part of the evidence pack).

Contract management

Contract management

Outlined below are a number of strategies we adopt to manage employer relationships and contracts:

- Formal contract review meetings (face to face meetings at agreed stages throughout the year)
- Informal contract review (regular remote calls for example weekly or monthly)
- Data reporting (weekly or monthly reporting on the key deliverables of the contract)

The Apprenticeship Management Team have the ability to act independently make decisions to support the employer. However, where a requirement will change a fundamental process or agreement the Commercial Director may need to be consulted to ensure the action is implemented across provision.

Where the employer has concerns that are not fully addressed by a member of the Apprenticeship Management Team, they will be able to escalate their concern or issue to the Managing Director. Additionally, the internal complaints procedure is available to an employer and they can escalate a concern following this process.

Continual engagement

Additional to the contract management activities there are events throughout the contracting period and beyond that we undertake to support our employers. These include but are not limited to:

- Employer forum and surveys;
- Employer network events;
- Support with national apprenticeship week;
- Employer communications such as news bulletins;
- Apprenticeship reviews (line managers to be involved which enables the delivery team to arrange and agree targets and off the job training on a regular basis);
- Direct helpdesk for general questions and queries (this is for employers to contact our central team to action any day to day queries such as system support for e-portfolio).

Managing underperformance

Employer that are found to be in breach of their contract agreement by not adhering to the principles of an apprenticeship such as not allowing apprentices adequate off the job time will be issued with contract concern notice. It is in the best interest of the all parties to resolve any breaches by identifying short term actions that will tackle the underperformance. An updated agreement will be outlined and managed to ensure the apprenticeship programme is brought back on track.

Contract updates

Throughout a contracting year there can / may be contracting updates, this can be due to changes in ESFA guidance, Ofsted guidance and or fee updates. Therefore, an updated agreement will be issued to employers

to agree to any changes to the contract of service and commitment statements. This updated agreement will be kept as part of the employer's evidence pack.

The Administration Team will update the ILR and evidence pack accordingly.

Continual improvement

Through our performance management approach, we continually review and manage a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Apprenticeship Management Team and Quality Manager are responsible for analysing performance against the organisational goals and contracting terms. The Apprenticeship Management Team holds regular meetings to review performance which includes employer satisfaction.

Performance is reviewed by analysing:

- Employer forum feedback;
- Employer survey feedback;
- Complaints analysis;
- Queries and feedback from contract meetings;
- Employer performance through data scrutiny e.g. apprentice achievements by employer, progress of apprentices and management of 20% off the job by employer.

The QIP will form the central record of all continual improvement activities that are established from employer related meetings, data and feedback. This is reviewed and updated monthly and is overseen with the Quality Manager.