

Apprenticeships – skills for life

February 3, 2023



Peter Behan of Group Horizon discusses the opportunities available to employers and trainees.

As National Apprenticeship Week 2023 launches (6 to 12 February 2023), it feels like a fitting time to take a fresh look at the assorted benefits and debunk a few of the more common misconceptions surrounding modern apprenticeships.

The theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2023 is Skills for Life and for individuals embarking on their apprenticeship journey, the objective is to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to embark on a fulfilling career within their chosen industry.

For employers, taking on an apprentice should be viewed as an investment in the future of the organisation – an ideal opportunity to address skills gaps, upskill the workforce and prepare for the challenges and opportunities that may lie ahead.

Investing in a workforce helps to retain talent and apprentices gain the all-important skills and knowledge needed to drive a business forward, taking on the values of the company and contributing to the development of a confident, dynamic workforce with future-ready skills. Businesses that have previously taken on apprentices recognise the value they can offer and the swift return on investment that can be achieved.

Apprenticeships are often viewed exclusively as a career option for school leavers but this is not the case – apprenticeships can be entered into at any age and are a tried and tested route into skilled employment for anyone looking for an opportunity to earn while they learn and gain valuable work experience in their chosen field. Many companies choose to employ apprentices once their course has been successfully completed and over 90% of apprentices either remain in employment or continue their learning.

One of the key early objectives is to find a trusted organisation that offers training for the apprenticeship you've chosen. There are a great many regional and national training providers to choose from but be sure to select a provider with experience in your chosen field and a track record of successfully training apprentices to a high standard. An up to the minute curriculum that has been developed by businesses for businesses will offer the apprentice the transferable skills to succeed and flourish. When researching training providers, it's worth looking out for those with industry recognised accreditations to their names.

Those concerned that apprenticeships don't cover the areas that matter most to employers can be assured that apprenticeship standards are commonly developed by a number of organisations who work together to create learning material that will provide the individual with the knowledge and expertise to succeed. Therefore, when an individual completes their course, they possess a skillset employers are specifically looking for.

Employers should dedicate some time to identifying the immediate and future needs of their business and consider how an apprentice could help to fill skills gaps or help grow certain areas of the organisation. The number of apprenticeships available in digital, data, environmental and technology roles is increasing and against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, apprenticeships will play a key role in supporting job creation and future growth. The National Apprenticeship Service can help promote apprenticeship opportunities to individuals, parents and education establishments and the government hosts a 'recruit an apprentice' service for registered training providers (including large employers with direct grant funding) to post vacancies and manage applications for apprenticeships and traineeships.

This National Apprenticeship Week will include more top UK employers and organisations from a range of industries and will showcase motivational apprentice stories highlighting how they have helped employers adapt and develop during another challenging year. Ahead of a week of positive messaging and success stories, the apprenticeship movement is reaching an ever-widening audience and whether you are looking to take on an apprentice or to start an apprenticeship yourself, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved.

Further details on apprenticeships and materials linked to National Apprenticeship Week 2023 can be found [here](#).