



Is an Apprenticeship a Good Choice for Me?

An apprenticeship is a brilliant opportunity for all young people who want to develop their skills, gain experience in a paid work-based environment, receive support and guidance, and achieve the qualifications they need to enable them to succeed in their careers.

Apprenticeships support young people with SEND and autism. This includes young people who have an EHCP, a SEND support plan, and are neurodivergent.

An apprenticeship may be the perfect opportunity for you/ your child if...

- You are over the age of 16
- You are not in (or do not wish to be in) full time education
- You want to earn while you learn

Are you interested? Find out more below!

What is an Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are a paid employment and training programme for any individual aged 16 and over. An apprenticeship combines training with real-world work in a company/ area of your choice.

Alongside on-the-job training, apprentices spend at least 20% of their working hours completing classroom-based learning with a college, university, or training provider, which leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

An apprenticeship includes:

- Paid employment with holiday leave
- Hands-on-experience in a sector/role of interest
- At least 20% off-the-job training
- Formal assessment which leads to a nationally recognised qualification

To be successful in an apprenticeship, an apprentice will need to follow workplace behaviours. Behaviours are mindsets, attitudes, or approaches needed



for working with others. An apprentice may already have the needed workplace behaviours, or they can be learnt on the job. [For more information about the standards of an apprenticeships and apprenticeship behaviours, visit the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education.](#)

Apprentices get the same working rights and conditions as everyone else, including [maternity leave](#), [paternity pay](#) and [sick leave](#).

Apprenticeship levels

Apprenticeships have four different levels, further explained [here](#):

- Intermediate apprenticeships (Level 2)
- Advanced apprenticeships (Level 3)
- Higher apprenticeships (Level 4-5)
- Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6 and 7)

Degree apprenticeships are available at levels 6 and 7 and are equivalent to a full bachelor's and master's Degree.

An apprenticeship can start at any level, but some may require:

- Previous qualifications such as English or Maths GCSEs
- Additional training in English or Maths to ensure the apprentice is at the right level

Where can I find an apprenticeship near me?

There are more than 600 apprenticeships available across more than 80 industry sectors. You can search for and [find an apprenticeship](#) by:

- Job title, employer, or reference number
- Location
- Apprenticeship level
- Disability Confident employers



How much does an apprentice get paid?

The amount the apprentice earns will depend on the industry, location, and the level of apprenticeship they choose.

- If aged between 16 and 18, or in the first year of the apprenticeship, the apprentice is entitled to the [apprentice rate](#). Some employers may top this hourly rate up, dependent on the employer.
- If the apprentice is 19 or over and has completed the first year of the apprenticeship, they are entitled to the [National Minimum Wage](#).

You can find out more information on the minimum wage in the article [The Mix: essential support for under 25's](#).

How many hours a week are most apprenticeships?

Apprenticeship programmes are usually thirty hours a week. An apprentice's weekly hours can be reduced if their programme is extended. Please refer to '[How long do most apprenticeships last?](#)'.

How long do most apprenticeships last?

Apprenticeships can last between 1 to 5 years depending on the level of the apprenticeship and the assessment criteria.

One adjustment for an apprentice with a learning disability and/or disability might be an offer of a part-time apprenticeship. The length of an apprenticeship can extend dependant on the hours spent working and training, especially if the working hours would be part time - under thirty hours.

An apprenticeship can also be extended as part of a supported apprenticeship agreement with the employer and training provider. This may include extending the end-point assessment.



What is an end-point assessment?

An [End Point Assessment \(EPA\)](#) is held by an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO), who are impartial bodies to the employer and training provider.

The end-point assessment evaluates the skills, knowledge, and behaviours outlined in the standards for the apprenticeship type. Once all evaluations, materials, and assessments for the apprenticeship are completed, the apprentice will receive their certificate.

What is a supported apprenticeship?

A supported apprenticeship is an apprenticeship where reasonable adjustments are applied so that individuals with a learning difficulty or disability, can achieve the apprenticeship. For example:

- Additional time to complete the apprenticeship
- Support with recruitment
- Support with reasonable adjustments
- Education support
- Reduced working hours
- En English and maths exemption

The Department for Education has recently announced changes to maths and English requirements for apprentices with special educational needs, learning disabilities, and learning difficulties. Specific criteria need to be met for a change in the maths and English requirement of an apprenticeship. Look at the [flowchart](#) on page 41 to help understand if an individual meets the maths and English requirements.



Information for an Apprentice with an EHCP

Does an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) end when an apprenticeship starts?

With an apprenticeship, the EHCP would operate the same way as a young person accessing education or training.

- The Education Health Care Plan must name the apprenticeship provider/ training provider, and type of apprenticeship (e.g., Construction Level 2, Business Administration Level 2)
- The Local Authority or training provider will set out the support that will be provided in the employment element of the apprenticeship, as well as the training side of it
- The annual review will look at how the apprenticeship meets the EHCP outcomes

Will the young person on an apprenticeship with an EHCP have annual reviews?

The responsibility for the Annual Review is with the Local Authority. The annual review will either be held with the Local Authority, or the apprenticeship training provider.

What happens to Child Benefit for a young person on an apprenticeship?

You'll stop getting Child Benefit if your child:

- starts paid work for 24 hours or more a week and is no longer in approved education or training
- starts an [apprenticeship in England](#)
- starts getting certain benefits, such as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit

Check what counts as approved education or training [when your child turns 16](#).

[Contact the Child Benefit Office](#) if you're not sure about your eligibility.



What happens to an EHCP if a young person moves onto a Higher or Degree apprenticeship (Level 4-7)?

There may be opportunities at your apprentice workplace to move on to the Higher (Level 4-5) or Degree (Level 6-7) apprenticeship. If you move onto a [Level 4-7](#) apprenticeship your EHC plan would cease.

Helpful questions to think about when choosing between an Apprenticeship or University- [Apprenticeship or University? 6 Questions to Guide Decisions](#)

Additional Support Available to Individuals on Apprenticeships

Reasonable adjustments

Employers have a [duty to make reasonable adjustments](#) to make sure workers with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs. This applies to all workers, including trainees, apprentices, contract workers, and business partners. Common reasonable adjustments include:

- Making adjustments to buildings
- Flexible working hours
- Providing specialist equipment
- Changing parts of your job description

If you need adjustments for the study aspect of the apprenticeship, such as note-taking software or a recording device, you will need to let the training provider know what you need so they can put reasonable adjustments in place.

Transport support

The 16-19 Bursary may be able to help with transport, if the apprenticeship is unpaid. Please contact your Training Provider for more information. You may also be able to use Access to Work towards travel costs, such as taxi fares to and from work, if you are unable to use public transport. You may also be able to get money towards adapting your vehicle through Access to Work.



What support is available for an apprentice with SEND on a Level 3 apprenticeship or below?

Dependant on the needs of the apprentice, and the support the employer and training provider may need to put into place, additional support funding may be available. The employer and training provider will consult with the Learning Support Funding Team to evaluate what support may be needed to put in place.

Access to Work for a degree apprentice (Level 6-7)

A degree apprentice (Level 6-7) can access funding through [Access to Work](#). This is a grant that can help pay for work-related things that don't fall under reasonable adjustments, such as taxi fares if you can't use public transport. The support you get will depend on your needs.

Through Access to Work, you can apply for:

- A grant to help pay for practical support with your work
- Support with managing your mental health at work
- Money to pay for communication support at job interviews
- Access to Work can also help you get or stay in work if you have a mental health condition or disability

[Maximus UK](#) has been funded by the Central Government to provide Access to Work support for mental health. They can provide guidance on workplace adjustments, wellbeing support plans, and in work consultation and guidance.

To apply for Access to Work, an employer and training provider must be in place for the apprenticeship, and a start date must be confirmed. It can take between two and six weeks before a first conversation with an Access to Work officer.

Financial Support in a Full Time Degree

If you become a full-time student at university and move onto a foundation degree or a degree course, it's worth exploring if you are eligible for [Disabled Student's Allowance \(DSA\)](#), which students can apply for during their university application.



Information for Employers

There are several funding streams that should be available to employers and apprenticeship providers to support people with SEND. Apprentices with SEND will have the same funding for the core costs of their training as all other apprentices. Employers and apprenticeship providers will also be able to access the funds for extra support.

The employer may be able to access extra support for working with the apprentice under the Educational Health Care Plan.

Employers are entitled to £1,000 per apprenticeship for 16–18-year-olds, or 19–24-year-olds with an EHC plan. Employers may be entitled to an [apprenticeship levy](#) for their tax's dependant on organisational circumstances.

Whilst on training for an apprenticeship a training provider may apply for Learning Support at a fixed amount of £150 per month. This can help providers make reasonable adjustments for an individual's learning needs as part of their apprenticeship. The Learning Support Funding is provided via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The costs for Learning Support can be related to the cost of staff time or specific equipment needed to support the apprentice.

Examples include:

- Additional staff to support apprentices
- Extended or more frequent assessor visits
- Specialist equipment
- Enabling additional time on exams

If the costs of an apprentice are beyond the £150 monthly limit, a training provider can apply for excess support learning support via the earning adjustment statement (EAS). This excess has a limitation of £19,000.

Learning support may be used to support people undertaking a higher or degree apprenticeship course as these students are excluded from claiming Disabled Student Allowance

The provider can apply for Exceptional Learning Support from the ESFA, which is reviewed on an individual basis.

This includes:

- Learners aged 19 and over with an identified learning difficulty and/or (LDD) without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- All age apprentices that have an identified LDD and are with or without an EHC plan
- Advanced loans-funded learners with an identified LDD without an EHCP (as part of the advanced learner loans bursary fund)
- If you're a care leaver, you may also be entitled to an additional bursary.

More information is available online. Please visit:

A new Apprentice Support Centre is now live on the apprenticeships.gov.uk website:

<https://apprenticesupportcentre.apprenticeships.gov.uk/hc/en-gb>

[Apprenticeships care leavers' bursary guidance](#)

[Learning support funding for apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities:](#)

[A guide for training providers](#)

[Excess Support Funding - Earnings adjustment statement](#)

If you work for Cambridgeshire County Council, you can also visit the [CCC Apprenticeships Portal](#) for more information, guidance and resources.



Case study and links to further information

Read Katie's experience whilst on an apprenticeship on page 13 within the Disability UK [Speaking from Experience report](#). Page 11 has Top Tips for employers and training providers.

For more in-depth apprenticeship training guidance please go on the following links:

- For a breakdown of apprenticeship expectations – [What is an apprenticeship?](#)
- For more information on employing an apprentice – [Employing an apprentice: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- For the benefits of apprenticeships – [What are the benefits of an apprenticeship?](#)
- Further information on Supported Apprenticeship from BASE (British Association for Supported Employment) – [Supported apprenticeships](#) Sometimes also known as Inclusive apprenticeships
- Learning Support Funding – [Learning support funding for apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities](#)
- The Disabled Apprentice Network is a forum for Disabled apprentices, where they can share their experiences and offer ideas and proposals on how to improve apprenticeships for Disabled people – [Disabled Apprentice Network](#)
- Education and Training Jargon Buster: Disability Rights UK – [Education and Training Jargon Buster](#)
- For more information on supporting an apprentice with a learning disability, see the following [factsheet from Mencap](#).