

EMPLOYERS GUIDE 2026

IDENTIFYING BUSINESS NEEDS & RECRUITMENT PROCESS



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IDENTIFYING BUSINESS NEEDS

Recruiting an apprentice is a chance to address skills shortages, improve your workforce, and plan for the future. Understanding where your business needs support will help you make better decisions when choosing an apprenticeship programme.

SKILLS GAPS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Many businesses face challenges as new technologies or processes emerge. Apprenticeships can help meet these challenges by training people in the skills your business lacks. To find out where you need support, ask yourself:

ARE THERE
NEW TOOLS OR
PROCESSES THAT
YOUR STAFF
NEED TO LEARN?

WHAT SKILLS DO
YOUR CURRENT
EMPLOYEES LACK?

WHAT SKILLS
WILL YOUR
BUSINESS NEED
OVER THE NEXT
FEW YEARS?

APPRENTICESHIPS CAN FILL THESE GAPS BY PROVIDING TAILORED TRAINING THAT MEETS YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS.

MATCHING APPRENTICESHIPS TO ROLES

It's important to match apprenticeships with the right roles in your business. BPIF Training offers a range of programmes that suit different positions:

- **Technical Roles:** For technical roles, like machine operators or technicians, the Print Technician apprenticeship provides the skills needed for the printing industry.
- **Management Roles:** If you want to develop managers or team leaders, higher-level apprenticeships like Operations/Departmental Manager or Senior Leader are available.
- **Support Roles:** Apprenticeships in Business Administration or Customer Service can help improve support functions within your business.

Choosing the right apprenticeship will ensure that your staff develop in ways that directly support your operations.

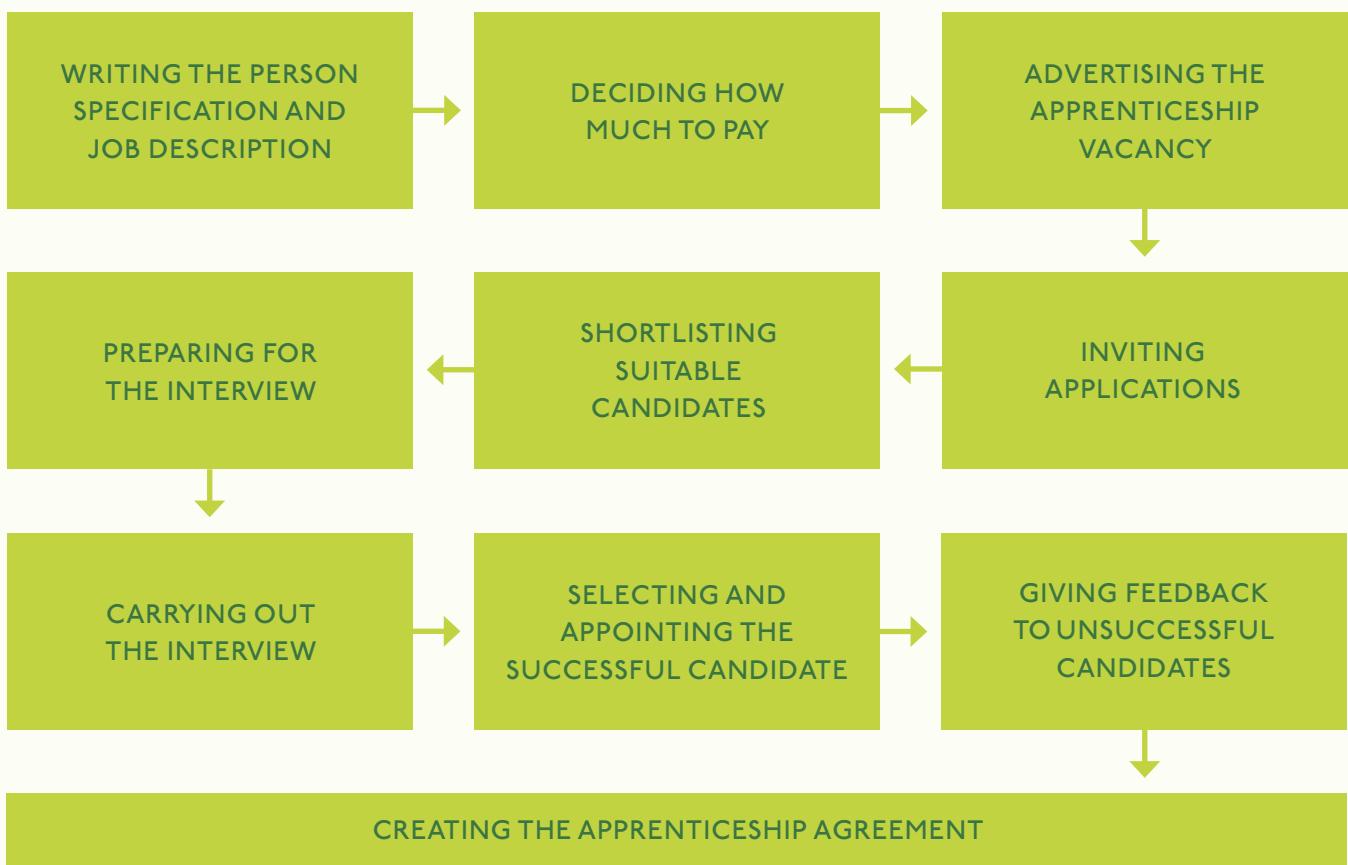
SUCCESSION PLANNING

Apprenticeships can also help with succession planning. By training staff, you create a pipeline of future leaders or specialists. This ensures your business has the skills it needs as it grows. Apprenticeships can help with:

- **Developing Internal Talent:** Apprenticeships allow you to train your own staff, rather than hiring from outside the company.
- **Preparing for the Future:** If you expect retirements or promotions, apprenticeships help you prepare replacements for key roles.
- **Building Resilience:** By training staff, you ensure your business can adapt to change and thrive.

Apprenticeships offer a way to prepare your workforce for the future while meeting current needs.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS



Recruiting the right apprentice involves a series of steps that ensure both you and the candidate are well-prepared for the role. It's important to approach this process thoughtfully, taking into account the job market, salary expectations, and the level of experience you can expect from your applicants.

CREATING THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND CANDIDATE PROFILE

The first step is to clearly define the role you are offering. A well-written job description helps attract the right candidates and ensures clarity about what the job entails. Include the main duties, the skills required, and any qualifications or experience you expect. For apprenticeships, it's often useful to emphasise the learning and development opportunities that come with the role.

GUIDE TO WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR APPRENTICESHIP VACANCIES

A well-written job description is a critical tool in attracting candidates and setting clear expectations.

1. JOB TITLE

Keep it Clear and Accurate: Use a straightforward, specific job title that reflects the role. The job title should convey the nature of the role at a glance.

2. SUMMARY OF THE ROLE

Provide a Brief Overview: Include a concise, 2-3 sentence overview of the position. Describe the primary purpose of the role.

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

List Core Duties: Provide a bullet-pointed list of the role's main tasks. Be specific about what the person will do day-to-day and note the position's role within the broader team.

4. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

Differentiate Between Must-Haves and Nice-to-Haves. This helps candidates assess their fit for the role. Remember that apprentices often have little-to-no experience, and so focus on soft skills, such as willingness to learn and team-working.

5. LOCATION AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

Specify Location and Working Conditions. Include details about travel requirements, physical demands, or work schedule expectations, if relevant.

6. SALARY AND BENEFITS

Apprenticeship wage: Provide a clear indication of the wage (if the wage varies, explain how and when).

Benefits: Mention any additional perks such as travel allowances, equipment provided, or employee discounts.

7. PROGRESSION

Be sure to highlight attractive benefits and be clear about progression pathways within your organisation.

Apprenticeships are seen as a route to a career, and not just a job.

8. COMPANY OVERVIEW

Include a Brief Introduction to the Company: Add a short description of your company, its mission, and the values or culture that set it apart. This can make your job description stand out and attract candidates aligned with your values.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1

USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Avoid language that may discourage certain groups from applying.

2

BE CLEAR BUT NOT OVERLY DETAILED

A concise, well-structured job description is more likely to attract interest than one packed with excessive details.

3

PREP

Be prepared to update and review regularly

SETTING THE SALARY

When deciding how much to pay, it's important to consider the broader job market. Think about who you are competing with for talent in your local area. Are other employers offering apprenticeships, or are you competing with businesses offering entry-level jobs? If your salary isn't competitive, you may struggle to attract the best candidates. That said, remember that apprenticeship salaries can be lower than standard entry-level roles because apprentices benefit from formal training and career progression opportunities. You should also be mindful of the minimum wage requirements for apprentices, ensuring you comply with legal standards while remaining competitive.

► <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

PROMOTING THE APPRENTICESHIP VACANCY

Once you've finalised the job description and salary, you'll need to promote the role.

MAKE USE OF THE:

FIND AN APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE

LOCAL JOB BOARDS

SOCIAL MEDIA (E.G. LINKEDIN)

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PLATFORMS

BPIF Training can support you in advertising the vacancy to attract a strong pool of candidates.

REVIEWING AND SHORTLISTING APPLICATIONS

When applications start coming in, your next task is to screen and shortlist candidates. For apprenticeship roles, it's important to be flexible in your expectations, particularly if you are recruiting a young person at the start of their career. While they may not have a wealth of experience, look for signs of enthusiasm, commitment, and a willingness to learn. Skills can be developed through training, but the right attitude is key.

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

Before interviewing, it's useful to prepare questions that will help you understand the candidate's motivation, interests, and potential. Keep in mind that apprentices, especially those new to the workforce, may be nervous or less polished than more experienced candidates. Focus on assessing their suitability for the role and their potential to grow into it.

OFFERING THE ROLE AND MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

When selecting your apprentice, it's important to manage expectations from the outset. If you're hiring a young person or someone new to the industry, they may need more guidance and support as they adjust to the working environment. Make sure you're clear about the level of responsibility they will take on and how their role will develop over time.



APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT AND COMMITMENT STATEMENT

When hiring an apprentice, it's essential to have the right agreements in place. An **Apprenticeship Agreement** and a **Commitment Statement** are both legal requirements, ensuring all parties—employer, apprentice, and training provider—understand their responsibilities and expectations.



APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT

The Apprenticeship Agreement is a contract between the employer and the apprentice. It outlines the specific apprenticeship framework or standard, the role of the apprentice, and the length of the apprenticeship. This agreement confirms that the apprentice is an employee with the same rights as others, such as pay, holidays, and working hours. **BPIF Training can provide a template agreement to ensure you meet these legal requirements with ease.**



COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The Commitment Statement sets out the learning and development plan for the apprentice. It includes:

- The content and schedule of training
- The apprentice's responsibilities during the programme
- The support that the employer and training provider will offer
- How progress will be monitored and reviewed

BPIF Training will support both the employer and the apprentice in completing the Commitment Statement. This will be done as part of the **onboarding process** to ensure that all parties are clear on their roles from the very beginning.

For more detailed information on apprentice pay and conditions, employers can visit this useful resource: [Apprentice Pay and Conditions](#).

MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about our Apprenticeships, please contact our team at training@bpif.org.uk or call us on 01676 526 060.



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