

BPIF TRAINING PROSPECTUS

Apprenticeships, NVQs and training for print, packaging and manufacturing

2026/27

JOINING THE DOTS... PERFECTLY

Developing talent. Reacting to change.
Staying competitive. Embracing new technology.

Print, packaging and manufacturing move fast, and the skills your business needs keep shifting with them. We've been training this industry for decades, which means we understand your production floor, your deadlines and your margins.

We make government-funded training straightforward. We handle the paperwork, the funding rules and the compliance, and we build programmes around how your business actually runs. From entry-level operatives to senior leaders, from a single apprentice to a whole department.

We will help you get ahead.

INVESTING IN OUR INDUSTRY, TOGETHER

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EMBRACE THE FUTURE

Digital presses, automated finishing, colour management systems, sustainability requirements — the technology on your floor looks nothing like it did ten years ago.

That changes what you need from your people. Roles that were purely manual now involve software. Machine operators need to interpret data. Supervisors manage processes as much as staff. Recruiting for those roles is harder, and retraining the people you already have is often faster than replacing them.

We build training around where the industry is going, not where it's been. That means standards that reflect current practice, tutors who work in this sector every day, and programmes that fit round production rather than pulling people off it.

Our 'always in fit' approach rests on three pillars: future fit, knowledge fit and people fit.



FUTURE FIT

Apprenticeship standards set what has to be covered, but how it's delivered is where the difference lies. We shape each programme around your roles and your production, and we keep our offer under review as the industry changes.

Leadership and management, business and, customer service, or the technical side of production — as new standards become available and existing ones are updated, we develop our provision to match what employers are actually asking for.



KNOWLEDGE FIT

Our tutor team brings substantial hands-on experience from print and manufacturing. They know the machines, the terminology and the pressures, because many have worked on the other side of them.

Our approach is workplace-led. You define what the role requires, and we build the programme around it — so the apprentice's learning maps onto the job they're actually doing, not a generic version of it.



PEOPLE FIT

We're inspected by Ofsted as part of delivering government-funded training, and hold a Grade 2 rating. Our matrix accreditation covers the quality of our information, advice and guidance.

We prioritise learners' health, safety and achievement — promoting safeguarding in their workplaces and supporting employers to provide environments where people can do well. Fair treatment isn't a policy statement for us; it's how we run every programme.

WHAT ARE THE KEY SKILLS YOU HAVE ACQUIRED DURING YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

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Running machine and colour management systems and problem solving skills

Knowledge on different printing equipment and how it works, different types of paper and their properties

Machine knowledge and understanding, sequential numbering, digital manipulation of photographs, CTP work, hot foil embossing and a variety of ancillary work

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WHAT WE OFFER

Apprenticeships combine paid work with structured training, with protected time each week for off-the-job learning built into the working week rather than taken in blocks.

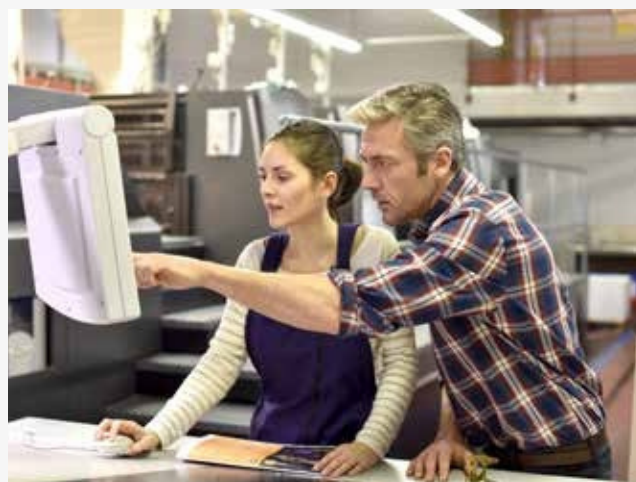
They work for existing staff and new recruits alike. We recruit apprentices all year round and match candidates to employers free of charge — you're not paying an agency fee to find the right person.

Our qualifications cover most areas of your business, split into two categories: print & manufacturing and business skills.



BUSINESS

Management, leadership, customer service and administration. We blend the units and modules to fit how your business actually operates, rather than delivering a standard programme.



PRINT AND MANUFACTURING

Technical work-based qualifications built on our decades in print manufacturing. Our provision keeps developing as new standards become available across print, packaging, signage and design.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION/ PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Shorter than apprenticeships, and assessed entirely in the workplace. NVQs suit staff who are already competent but have no formal qualification recording it.

Personal Development Awards certify competency in specific areas — pre-press, press, post-press and print administration — as concise unit accreditation rather than a full qualification

‘INTRO TO...’ WORKSHOPS

One-day courses running throughout the year, giving people a working grounding in a specific area. Book individual places, or ask us to deliver any of our 'intro to...' courses for a group at your site.

WHO CAN DO AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Almost anyone. There's no upper age limit and no restriction on length of service, so apprenticeships work equally well for existing staff and new recruits. The one condition is that the apprenticeship must teach genuinely new skills. Government funding can't be used where someone already has significant knowledge and behaviours in the standard they'd be taking.

APPRENTICESHIPS - HOW DOES THE MONEY WORK?

Let's face it – there is a cost attached to all apprenticeship training. How and what you pay depends on three factors:

Levy-paying employers — if your annual wage bill is over £3 million, you already pay 0.5% into the Apprenticeship Levy. That isn't a tax; it's your money, held in an account you draw on to fund training for existing staff or new recruits, and the government adds a top-up.

Non-levy employers — if your wage bill is under £3 million, the government co-invests the majority of the training cost and you contribute the remainder. Costs vary by standard, so get in touch and we'll tell you exactly what yours would be.

Small employers — additional support is available for businesses with fewer than 50 employees taking on younger apprentices. We'll confirm what currently applies.

PRINT & MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIPS

Our technical apprenticeships, built on decades in print manufacturing.

These standards cover production roles from entry level through to team leadership: press operation, print finishing, pre-press, packaging, signage and manufacturing. Level 2 through to Level 4.

They suit new recruits starting out and experienced staff moving into technical or supervisory roles — and because they progress through the levels, an apprentice who starts as an operative can work up to running a production area without ever leaving the shop floor.



PRINT OPERATIVE LEVEL 2

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The entry route into print. Apprentices learn to assist in producing a printed product or component — reading and following work instructions, operating equipment, running checks before and during production, and confirming the final output meets specification.

It applies right across the sector: magazines, newspapers, books and posters; labels, cartons, packaging, signs and banners; personal gifting such as calendars and greetings cards; functional printing onto plastics, textiles and electronic circuits; and security products including passports, ID cards and banknotes.

This is a core and options standard. All apprentices cover the same core knowledge, skills and behaviours, then specialise in one of three areas:

- Pre-press operative** — preparing and checking digital files, producing proofs, and outputting plates, screens and image carriers.
- Press operative** — setting up, running and shutting down presses, first-line maintenance, and inspecting quality through the run.
- Post-press operative** — finishing processes and equipment including guillotines, binding, laminating and die-cutting.

DURATION

24 Months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £8,000



PRINT TECHNICIAN LEVEL 3

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Print technicians take responsibility for output and quality across the production process. They set up and run equipment, control colour and consistency, resolve problems as they arise, and make sure the finished product meets the customer's specification.

It's the step up from Print Operative — more technical judgement, more accountability for what leaves the floor. Print remains central to marketing and communications, and increasingly sits alongside digital and multi-channel work rather than apart from it.

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Pre-press operative — preparing and checking digital files, colour management and profiling, producing proofs, and outputting plates, screens and image carriers.

Press operative — setting up, running and shutting down presses, first-line maintenance, and inspecting quality throughout the run.

Post-press operative — finishing processes and equipment including guillotines, binding, laminating and die-cutting.

DURATION

36 Months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £14,000



WHAT DO BPIF TRAINING DO WELL?



Expert trainers, flexible, great communications

Trainers have a great way of engaging with you and adapt well to your needs as an individual

Constant communication between trainer, trainee and employee. Trainer always informative and reliable to discuss any concerns from trainee or employee perspective



LEAN MANUFACTURING OPERATIVE LEVEL 2

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Lean manufacturing operatives prepare, run and complete manufacturing operations, working to standard operating procedures and safe working practices.

The role covers the breadth of a production environment: assembly, inspection, quality assurance, logistics, material handling and finishing. That makes it useful where staff move between processes rather than sitting on one machine.

Apprentices learn to:

- Maintain health and safety at all times — correct PPE, safe use of equipment and tooling, safe stopping and resetting of machinery
- Keep an organised work area using 5S principles
- Dispose of waste in line with environmental requirements
- Contribute to continuous improvement using kaizen tools, process visualisation and lean problem-solving
- Carry out quality checks throughout production, so quality is built in rather than inspected out, and raise defects in line with your quality standards

DURATION

12-15 months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £6,000



SIGNAGE TECHNICIAN LEVEL 3

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Signage technicians design, manufacture, fabricate and install signage — the full process from artwork through to the sign going up on site.

They work across a wide range of materials, including wood, vinyl, plastic, metal, glass, textiles, card and composites, on both illuminated and non-illuminated products.

Typical work covers:

- Vehicle signage, including wraps
- Post-mounted signage — road, directional, traffic and gantry signs
- Building signage — entry and exit, health and safety, fascia, window signs and manifestations
- Freestanding signs and displays, including pavement signs and exhibition displays
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Most signage businesses are small and medium enterprises, with some larger operators and national franchises, supplying customers across the private and public sectors.

DURATION

24 Months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £6,000



PROCESS LEADER LEVEL 4

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Process leaders run production areas. They lead large teams while also providing the technical direction those teams rely on — the step up for anyone moving from operating equipment to being accountable for how a whole area performs.

The role covers:

- Leading and developing teams, managing performance and industrial relations
- Determining and managing budgets and resources
- Using core production KPIs to drive the continuous improvement cycle
- Managing quality resolutions
- Health, safety and environmental compliance within their area
- Project management — planning, organising, monitoring progress and mitigating risk
- Building relationships across HR, purchasing, planning and finance so those functions support production

It's found in businesses with high-volume or advanced manufacturing processes, and it's the natural progression from Print Technician or Lean Manufacturing Operative for anyone taking on responsibility for other people.

DURATION

18-24 months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £11,000

BUSINESS APPRENTICESHIPS

Qualifications that apply across your whole business, not just the shop floor.

Management and leadership, customer service, administration and supply chain — from a first-time team leader at Level 3 through to a director shaping strategy at Level 7. Each one is tailored to how your roles are actually defined, rather than delivered off a standard template.

These standards suit staff stepping into a new level of responsibility and experienced people who have grown into a role without ever having it formally recognised.



CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST LEVEL 3

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Customer service specialists are the referral point when a query gets complicated. They handle the complex and technical requests, take on escalated complaints, and see ongoing problems through to resolution.

As experts in your products and services, they also share that knowledge with the wider team — so the whole department gets better, not just one person.

The role covers:

- Acting as escalation point for complex or technical customer issues
- Resolving ongoing problems and managing difficult conversations
- Gathering and analysing customer data to drive service improvements
- Sharing product and service knowledge across colleagues
- Working across organisational and generic IT systems, with awareness of wider digital tools
-

It applies in any customer-facing setting — contact centres, internal sales, account management, or any point where customers reach your business.

DURATION

15 Months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £6,000



BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR LEVEL 3

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Business administrators keep an organisation running. They develop, maintain and improve administrative systems, work across teams, and resolve issues as they come up — often the person who knows how things actually get done.

The role covers:

- Producing and managing documents and records
- Planning, organising and prioritising across competing demands
- Supporting projects and coordinating between functions
- Communicating with colleagues and with customers and suppliers
- Identifying and improving how administrative processes work
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The skills transfer anywhere, which makes it a strong route for someone supporting more than one part of the business. It also builds the foundation for progression into a team leader or management role later.

DURATION

18 Months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £4,500



SUPPLY CHAINPRACTITIONER LEVEL 3

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Supply chain practitioners sit between the factory and the customer. They forecast demand, work with production on scheduling, process orders, and coordinate with hauliers and distribution — keeping the whole chain moving.

- The role covers:
- Forecasting customer demand
 - Liaising with production to schedule work
 - Processing orders and managing the order pipeline
 - Coordinating with hauliers and distribution centres
 - Using data to plan and resolve supply issues
 - Understanding cost, lead time and the trade-offs between them

Because the role touches so many functions, it develops relationship building, influencing and stakeholder management alongside the analytical and numeracy skills. It's a strong route into management or specialist planning roles.

DURATION

30 Months

COST

Most employers pay a fraction of the headline cost, or nothing beyond their existing levy contribution. Ask us for a figure based on your business.

Funding band: £15,000



TEAM LEADER / SUPERVISOR LEVEL 3

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

First-line management. Team leaders and supervisors take responsibility for a team or a defined project and deliver against a clear outcome — giving direction, setting expectations and making sure the work gets done.

The role covers:

- Supporting, managing and developing team members
- Planning and monitoring workloads and resources
- Delivering operational plans and managing projects
- Resolving problems and making decisions within their authority
- Building relationships internally and with customers and suppliers

It suits people newly promoted into a supervisory role, and experienced supervisors who have never had formal leadership training. The specifics vary by organisation, but the underlying skills are the same wherever the role sits.

DURATION

12-15 months

COST

This standard has been withdrawn from government funding and is now available at employer cost. Get in touch and we'll confirm pricing for your team.

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Models and theories have given me a good foundation to build upon and develop my own style of leadership and management. Completing exercises, hearing anecdotes and engaging with other professionals has really helped my confidence in my business knowledge growth. This growth has helped me position my self where I want to be in my company and provided me with a great platform to direct my career from. My communication has improved following my studies and utilising business tools to organise groups of people.

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LEARNER QUOTE

OPERATIONS / DEPARTMENT MANAGER LEVEL 5

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Operations and departmental managers run a function. They deliver operational goals as part of the wider business strategy, manage teams and projects, and are accountable to a senior manager or business owner.

The role covers:

- Creating and delivering operational plans
- Leading and managing teams, and managing change
- Financial and resource management
- Managing projects to time and budget
- Talent management, coaching and mentoring
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It's the step up from Team Leader or Process Leader — broader accountability, longer time horizons, and responsibility for other managers as well as staff.

DURATION

30 months

COST

This standard has been withdrawn from government funding and is now available at employer cost. Get in touch and we'll confirm pricing for your team.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

An NVQ assesses what someone can already do. Rather than following a training programme, the candidate builds a portfolio of evidence from their day-to-day work, and an assessor confirms they meet the national standard.

That makes NVQs the right route for experienced staff — the press operator who has run the same machine for years, the estimator who knows the job inside out, the supervisor promoted on merit. The competence is there. What's missing is the certificate.

What it gives you:

- A nationally recognised qualification, proving capability rather than knowledge
- Assessment based on what people actually do, using evidence from real work
- No off-the-job training requirement, so no downtime and no fixed programme length
- Demonstrable commitment to quality, internally and to your customers
- Staff working to current industry standards and best practice

Personal Development Awards work the same way but on a smaller scale, certifying competency in specific areas — pre-press, press, post-press and print administration.

Funding. NVQs are employer-funded rather than government-funded. We keep our pricing competitive because upskilling this industry matters to us. Get in touch and we'll confirm costs for your team.

OUR NVQS ON OFFER INCLUDE:

PRINT ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING Aimed at those who carry out administration work in a print working environment in a wide range of roles that may involve decision making, quality checks and making contributions to improvements in working practices and procedures.	DESIGN AND PRE-PRESS Ideal for people who work within a commercial production environment covering Digital Artwork, Digital Pre-Press or Digital Print Production.
MACHINE PRINTING AND PRINT FINISHING For those who are Machine Operatives on single or multi-unit printing presses.	CARTON MANUFACTURE Aimed at those undertaking activities in the carton manufacture working environment across a wide range of roles.
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION For those looking to develop key administration skills including record and document production, planning and organising, and project management.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT We offer three standalone qualifications from level 2 to 5, ideal for those who have just moved into a leadership position or for those who would like to improve their management skill set.

Our personal development awards take specific units from the NVQs that we offer to provide employers cost effective short, sharp, focussed accreditation aimed at specific aspects of print business. We cover 9 pathways:

DIGITAL ARTWORK Design and produce creative digital colour artwork for print Manage colour reproduction in digital pre-press Produce approved colour proofs from digital artwork	DIGITAL PRINTING Manage the colour digital printing machines Control the use of variable data with digital printing machines Manage colour reproduction in digital pre-press	FLEXOGRAPHIC PRINTING Manage printing machines Prepare inks and coatings for business Set and use ink drying equipment Maintain print equipment in working order
SHEET FED LITHOGRAPHY Manage printing machines Prepare inks and coatings for printing Maintain print equipment in working order	WEB FED LITHOGRAPHY Set up and use ink drying equipment Maintain print equipment in working order Manage printing machines Manage materials handling for newspaper and periodicals print	PRINT FINISHING 1 Manage guillotines Manage adhesive binding machinery Set and run multi knife trimming machinery Manage folding machinery
PRINT FINISHING 2 Manage folding machinery Manage guillotines Manage in setting, stitching, and trimming machinery	PRINT ADMINISTRATION (CUSTOMER SERVICE) Understand and contribute to the achievement of customer satisfaction Produce and analyse estimates for print or print services Review print production costs and prepare invoices	PRINT ADMINISTRATION (PRODUCTION) Produce and analyse estimates for print or print services Plan, schedule and monitor print production Order products and services

‘INTRO TO’ WORKSHOPS

One-day workshops for skills you need now, without committing to a longer programme. Each runs 10am to 3pm, delivered live online by our own tutors — not a recording.

Current subjects:

- Intro to Print
- Intro to Lean
- Intro to Team Leader
- Intro to Customer Service
- Negotiation and Persuasion
- Training for Trainers

Several mirror the opening stage of our apprenticeship standards, which makes them useful two ways: as standalone training, or as a low-commitment way to test whether a full apprenticeship suits someone before you enrol them.

Dates run throughout the year and are listed on our website. You can book individual places, or we can deliver any of these for a group at your site — often better value once you have four or five people.

If you need something not listed here, ask. We can usually put together bespoke training around a specific requirement.

GET IN TOUCH

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