



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Guide for Local Authorities on Apprenticeships in Wales

August 2018



UNDEB EWROPEAIDD  
EUROPEAN UNION



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop**  
**European Social Fund**

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## Covering Note

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The Apprenticeship Unit within the Welsh Government is tasked with ensuring that all sectors within Wales understand the apprenticeship offer and that apprenticeships capture current industry needs and future demand.

This guidance provides information specific to Local Authorities in Wales on what apprenticeships are, how you can use them, and how the apprenticeship levy applies. There are also links to further guidance and support.

### **Who is the publication for?**

This guidance is for all Local Authorities in Wales.

### **Key Steps for Local Authorities to take having read this guidance;**

- Consider how you can introduce new or further develop the apprenticeships opportunities within your local authority and how you will include them in your workforce planning; whether you are looking to recruit new staff or up-skilling existing workforce
- Consider how your authority can engage with other employers and organisations to encourage apprenticeships more widely in your local economy.
- Consider the training routes / frameworks that are available via apprenticeships – **Annex A**. Are they meeting your workforce planning needs?

Hopefully the guide will help you understand how apprentice funding in Wales can best support your workforce planning requirements and future needs.

### **Feedback routes / further guidance and support**

If you have any feedback, questions or require further information you can email:

[DfES-ApprenticeshipUnit@gov.wales](mailto:DfES-ApprenticeshipUnit@gov.wales)

# 1 Overview of Apprenticeship Policy in Wales

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## Background – Our Policy & Priorities

In February 2017, the Welsh Government published its Apprenticeships Skills Policy;

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170206-app-policy-plan-en-v3.pdf>

The policy is aimed at aligning apprenticeships to the needs of the Welsh economy so that the skills system is responsive to industry changes, as well as investing in training which will provide economic and social returns.

Apprenticeships continue to be our flagship programme and have proven their effectiveness in the market place with employers and young people alike. Wales has developed a highly successful Apprenticeship Programme over the last few years, one built in partnership with Welsh businesses and with a strong focus on the quality of delivery. The programme is highly valued by both employers and apprentices and our framework success rates remain high with completion rates consistently over 80 per cent.

Our aim is to deliver a minimum of 100,000 apprenticeship places up to 2021, to meet and support the process of aligning the skills people gain and the skills the economy needs. We want Wales to be a country that gives equal esteem to vocational education.

We recognise the need for Wales to embed skills development into everyday business practice. It calls for the continuing development of a professional workforce that is recognised and rewarded accordingly, whilst securing the future workforce by offering what must be seen as a career of choice and an alternative to Higher Education.

## Priorities for Apprenticeship Recruitment

Our delivery priorities for Wales until 2021 are:

- **Addressing acute skill shortages** through extending and developing apprenticeships, particularly in growth sectors.
- **Developing higher level skills**, focusing on apprenticeships at level 3 and above, where returns tend to be higher and where the most successful European countries deliver.
- **Improving Access, Equality and Equity of opportunity**, through supporting people into employment who are new to the workplace and focusing on progression in the workplace.
- **Deliver Apprenticeships in Welsh**, through strengthening opportunities to undertake an apprenticeship through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

- **Increasing apprentices aged 16-19** - including raising the number of school leavers going on to apprenticeships.
- **Developing skill pathways** - Integrating apprenticeships into the wider education system.
- **Establish a new system for framework review and development** to ensure that Apprenticeships are designed to meet employer needs and are responsive to industry changes.

## 2 Apprenticeships

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Apprenticeships are a way to earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills.

An apprentice must be employed for a minimum of 16 hours a week and be receiving at least the apprenticeship minimum wage or the age related wage. The Welsh Government pays for the training element whilst the employer pays for the employment costs, such as salary. The funding supports both new entrants as well as those that are already in employment wishing to up-skill.

It usually takes 2 or 3 years to complete an apprenticeship. It combines practical, work-based training with study (usually one day per week), working towards a **Welsh Apprenticeship Framework**.

Welsh apprenticeships are delivered via a network of **19 approved works based learning, quality assured training providers (see Annex B)**. Their aim is to mentor, support and advise employers and individuals on all aspects of the programme. Apprentices will select an appropriate Apprenticeship Framework to complete. All frameworks include a **Competence, Knowledge and relevant Essential Skills qualifications**.

**Entry level** requirements and qualifications are detailed within each framework.

There are around 190 job roles available on a broad range of sectors covering the following levels:

- Foundation Apprenticeship                      Level 2 (GCSE level)
- Apprenticeships                                      Level 3 (A Level)
- Higher Apprenticeships                            Level 4-5 (HNC/HND/FDs)
  
- Degree Apprenticeships                            Level 6 – *these are currently in development in ICT and Engineering*

Apprenticeships are a great way for local authorities to improve the skills base of their employees. They are a tried and tested way to recruit new staff, and to re-train or up-skill existing staff of all ages and levels of experience, in a wide variety of roles. You can use them to provide training that is tailored to the needs and requirements of your school, with learning taking place in the workplace as well as through formal training, to minimise disruption and maximise impact.

Further information on Apprenticeships can be accessed on the Welsh Government website;

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/apprenticeships/?lang=en>

### 3 The Apprenticeship Levy & what it means for Wales

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**The UK Apprenticeship Levy is a UK Government employment tax** that came into force from 6 April 2017. All employers (Public, Private and Third sectors) with a pay bill of more than £3 million per annum will pay the levy.

The levy rate is **0.5% of the employers' pay bill** based on total employee annual earnings excluding payments, such as benefits in kind.

Employers will have a levy **allowance of £15,000 per year** to offset against the levy which is paid to HM Revenue and Customs through PAYE process. There is an exemption for Employers Class 1 NIC for qualifying apprentices under the age of 25.

Wales receives its proportion of the Apprenticeship Levy via the Barnett consequential, alongside Northern Ireland and Scotland. For 2017/18 and 2018/19 this does not represent a population share of the forecast levy and in recognition of this the Treasury has provided a small amount of additional funding in these years.

**We acknowledge the additional financial burden the levy will place on public sector employers.** Wales, along with Scotland and Northern Ireland, were not consulted on the introduction of the levy, its scope and the rate.

As background: a press release from February 2016:

<http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2016/concern-over-apprenticeship-levy/?lang=en>

## **4 Main outcomes from initial Local Authority workforce planning workshop held 22/2/2017**

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The agenda for the day covered; overview of the Apprenticeship programme, its priorities and access to providers; understanding local authority workforce planning needs; short and long term support and framework requirements.

The workshop was attended by representatives from the majority of local authorities across Wales, Welsh Government staff from the apprenticeship unit, WLGA representatives and staff from the Public Services & Staff Commission.

The workshop provided everyone with the opportunity to share how they are utilising apprenticeships within their local authorities, plans for future recruitment and workforce planning, discussions around the current offer, support available etc.

A number of key findings were agreed along with short, medium and longer terms actions;

Short to Medium term actions;

- Review existing frameworks
- Establish task and finish group
- Consider impact of city region deal
- Link Have a Go equipment to public sector careers
- Options around utilising the Levy
- Shared Apprenticeship models – how could they be utilised?
- Cross-border issues – explore
- Provider provision – is it meeting needs?
- Use of Social Media
- Produce Newsletter

Longer term actions;

- Design and develop new apprenticeship framework following consultation through the workshop (taking account of local government reform)



## 5 Keys Steps for Local Authorities to consider

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### STEP 1: Consider the apprentice routes that you may wish to access

A full list of relevant apprenticeship routes and frameworks are detailed on **Annex A**.

A workforce planning guidance document was produced by the Public Services Staff Commission in July 2017 and should be considered alongside this guidance - see **Annex D**.

Local Authorities employ staff in a wide range of roles that align with apprenticeships. Remember that apprenticeships are for existing employees as well as new recruits, so they are both a way of accessing new talent, and retraining or up-skilling your current staff.

When considering how to use apprenticeships, you might want to think about the following:

- ✚ Are other neighbouring local authorities already using apprenticeships, and if so what can I learn from them?  
NB – Welsh Government are able to supply statistics on the number, types and levels of apprenticeships being accessed by Local Authorities across Wales to help this process.
- ✚ What skills do our employees need now and in the future and can apprenticeships help with this?
- ✚ How do the roles in our local authority fit with the currently available apprenticeships? Is the current offer meeting your needs?

The **Apprenticeship Framework Online (AFO)** website will provide you with full details of all frameworks available (search by Wales or Sector as this website relates to the UK as a whole), and their content. Wales only funds frameworks, and is not moving to the Industry Standards as in England.

<http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/>

Or refer to the Welsh Government / Business Wales website for details of **Priority Sectors and Providers** that deliver in Wales;

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/employing-apprentice>

All frameworks follow a standard format and content - they include a **Competence, Knowledge Essential Skills)** qualifications and detail the pathways and levels available; including the job roles relevant to the framework. .

## **STEP2: Accessing apprenticeship support and funding in Wales**

If you are interested in finding out more, further information is available on the Welsh Government website or via Business Wales. Links as follows;

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/apprenticeships/?lang=en>

The contact details of the 19 approved work based learning providers referred to can be seen on **ANNEX B** of this guidance.

## 6 FAQ

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### 1. Will a digital voucher system operate in Wales in the same way as England?

The English system operates via a digital voucher / on-line account accessed via the new '**apprenticeship service**'. Employers can manage the 'funds' in their account and source and manage their own training requirements with their chosen training provider.

The Welsh Government has no plans to introduce the digital voucher system or apprenticeship standards as in England. We have seen no evidence that a voucher system would improve quality within the system as it is thought to create additional bureaucracy for employers and uncertainties as to how non levy employers would be supported. Standards are still in early stages of development and we are maintaining a watching brief on their progress as well as feedback from the customer/industry.

### 2. Why is the apprenticeship system different in Wales?

Skills', including apprenticeships, is a matter devolved to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government has developed its apprenticeship system to meet the needs and priorities of Wales. Wales has a focus on quality to ensure value for money. Apprenticeship delivery and funding is prioritised based on the needs of the economy and employers. For example, we have established **Regional Skills Partnerships** to engage with employers and provide us with intelligence on skills needs and gaps. We prioritise our provision in line with evidenced need.

There are 3 Regional Skills Partnerships;

#### **North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB)**

Contact Sian Lloyd-Roberts: [sianlloydroberts@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:sianlloydroberts@gwynedd.llyw.cymru) or [www.northwaleseab.co.uk](http://www.northwaleseab.co.uk)

**Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership (CCRSP)**, formerly known as the South East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSkIP)

Contact Elizabeth Fitzgerald: [elizabeth.fitzgerald@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.fitzgerald@wlga.gov.uk) or [www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)

#### **Regional Learning & Skills Partnership for South West & Mid Wales**

Contact Jane Lewis: [jelewis@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:jelewis@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) or [www.rip.org.uk](http://www.rip.org.uk)

## Annex A – Apprenticeships relevant to Local Authority functions

Local Authorities employ staff in a **wide range of functions**, many of which may be suitable for using apprenticeships to support training and development.

**Apprenticeship Frameworks** set out the core knowledge; skills and behaviours apprentices will need to demonstrate to be fully competent in an occupation. **Entry level** requirements and qualifications are also detailed within each framework.

### Levels of Apprenticeships;

- **Foundation Apprenticeship (Level 2)** – Foundation apprentices study towards qualifications equivalent to 5 GCSEs or NVQ Level 2 and often go on to complete Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships.
- **Apprenticeship (Level 3)** – Apprentices gain valuable on the job skills, whilst studying towards nationally recognized qualification equivalent to 5 GCSEs, 2 A-Levels and NVQ level 3.
- **Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4+)** – Higher Apprenticeships allow individuals to work towards a qualification equivalent to a foundation or honors degree. We are currently developing and will be piloting Degree Apprenticeships from September 2018, in the ICT and Engineering sectors initially.



LOCAL AUTHORITY  
DEPARTMENTS match

## **ANNEX B – List of approved Work Based Learning Training providers in Wales**

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### **SOUTH WALES AREA:**

#### **ALS Training**

**01633 663000**

Helena Williams / [helena.williams@alstraining.org.uk](mailto:helena.williams@alstraining.org.uk)

[www.alstraining.org.uk](http://www.alstraining.org.uk)

#### **ACT Training**

**02920 464727**

Caroline Cooksley / [ccooksley@acttraining.org.uk](mailto:ccooksley@acttraining.org.uk)

[www.acttraining.org.uk](http://www.acttraining.org.uk)

#### **Babcock Training Limited**

**02920 239112**

Gertie Burke / [gertie.burke@babcockinternational.com](mailto:gertie.burke@babcockinternational.com)

[www.babcockinternational.com](http://www.babcockinternational.com)

#### **Cardiff and the Vale College / QSA Consortium**

**01446 748212**

Andrew Whitcombe / [awhitcombe@cavc.ac.uk](mailto:awhitcombe@cavc.ac.uk)

[www.cavc.ac.uk](http://www.cavc.ac.uk)

#### **CITB**

**01656 655226**

Alison Dudfield / [alison.dudfield@citb.co.uk](mailto:alison.dudfield@citb.co.uk)

[www.citb.co.uk](http://www.citb.co.uk)

#### **Gower College Swansea**

**01792 284121 / 01792 284275**

Rachel Searle / [rachel.searle@gcs.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.searle@gcs.ac.uk)

[www.gcs.ac.uk](http://www.gcs.ac.uk)

#### **ISA Training**

**01656 869986**

Dawn Elliott / [dawn.elliott@isatraining.co.uk](mailto:dawn.elliott@isatraining.co.uk)

[www.isatraining.co.uk](http://www.isatraining.co.uk)

#### **ITEC Training Solutions**

**02920 663800**

Ceri Murphy / [c.murphy@itecskills.co.uk](mailto:c.murphy@itecskills.co.uk)

[www.itecskills.co.uk](http://www.itecskills.co.uk)

#### **Marr Corporation t/a T2 Group**

**02920 799133**

Jo Harvey / [jo.harvey@t2group.co.uk](mailto:jo.harvey@t2group.co.uk)

[www.t2business.co.uk](http://www.t2business.co.uk)

**Pembrokeshire College****01437 753177**Berni Tyler / [b.tyler@pembrokeshire.ac.uk](mailto:b.tyler@pembrokeshire.ac.uk)[www.pembrokeshire.ac.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire.ac.uk)**People Plus****01443 686746**Denise Lacey / [denise.lacey@peopleplus.co.uk](mailto:denise.lacey@peopleplus.co.uk)[www.peopleplus.co.uk](http://www.peopleplus.co.uk)**Rathbone Training****02920 674943**Marc Lasseter / [marc.lasseter@rathboneuk.org](mailto:marc.lasseter@rathboneuk.org)[www.rathboneuk.org](http://www.rathboneuk.org)**Skills Academy Wales at NPTC Group****01639 648325**Louise Akers / [louise.akers@nptcgroup.ac.uk](mailto:louise.akers@nptcgroup.ac.uk)[www.skillsacademywales.co.uk](http://www.skillsacademywales.co.uk)**The CAD Centre UK Ltd****01792 644178**Linda Thomas / [linda.thomas@cadcentreuk.com](mailto:linda.thomas@cadcentreuk.com)[www.cadcentreuk.com](http://www.cadcentreuk.com)**Torfaen Training****01633 875929**Ceri Moffatt / [training@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:training@torfaen.gov.uk)[www.training.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.training.torfaen.gov.uk)**Vocational Skills Partnership****01639 893229**Tammy Barker / [tammyb@vsptraining.co.uk](mailto:tammyb@vsptraining.co.uk)[www.vsptraining.co.uk](http://www.vsptraining.co.uk)**MID WALES AREA****Cambrian Training Company****01938 555893**Katy Godsell / [apprenticeships@CambrianTraining.com](mailto:apprenticeships@CambrianTraining.com)[www.CambrianTraining.com](http://www.CambrianTraining.com)**NORTH WALES****Coleg Cambria****01978 311794**[employers@cambria.ac.uk](mailto:employers@cambria.ac.uk)[www.cambria.ac.uk](http://www.cambria.ac.uk)**Grwp Llandrillo Menai****01248 370125**Jane Howells / [wbcconsortium@gllm.ac.uk](mailto:wbcconsortium@gllm.ac.uk)[www.gllm.ac.uk](http://www.gllm.ac.uk)

## **ANNEX C: Improving the accessibility of apprenticeships**

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We are creating clearer routes into apprenticeships for 14-19 year olds, through facilitating the skills training and promoting awareness of vocational learning and apprenticeship options, as detailed below:

### **SKILLS COMPETITIONS**

Annual campaigns are operating to raise the profile of the apprenticeships to young people. Skills Competitions allow vocational learners to develop and show cases their skills at a UK and world level. Wales was the top region for Skills Competitors at the latest WorldSkills UK Live. We had 99 competitors (which is just over 20% of the UK total). Wales has secured 25 competitors in the UK squad for WorldSkills in Russia in 2019 with 4 competitors representing the Wales and the UK at EuroSkills Budapest in September 2018.

The competitions aims to raise the profile of skills in Wales and offers school pupils, students, trainees and apprentices in Wales a chance to challenge, benchmark and raise their skills. A variety of competitions are held annually across multiple sectors, including; Media & Creative, Construction & Infrastructure, Engineering and Technology, IT & Enterprise and Hospitality & Lifestyle. Further information can be found at <https://www.inspiringskills.wales/skills-competition-wales>

### **HAVE A GO EVENTS**

The “Have a Go” initiative is aimed at those aged 11-16, to try out new skills on a range of fun and interactive activities - such as virtual welding, programming robots and using a simulated tractor.

Since its inception in March 2016 through to March 2017, the Have a Go initiative has engaged with 129 schools in Wales, 22 local authorities and 55,000 young people.

<https://www.haveagowales.co.uk/>

### **JUNIOR APPRENTICESHIPS (Pilot Programme)**

Junior Apprenticeships offer year 10 and 11 pupils the opportunity to study full-time for a future career in a college setting from the age of 14. The programme offers a two-year programme of work-related education with work experience built in, alongside a Level 2 course that is equivalent to four or five GCSEs, in a range of different vocational pathways. Each apprentice also studies GCSEs in Maths and English alongside their chosen area.

There are a number of programme codes in the directory to reflect different Junior Apprenticeship pathways.

Each Junior Apprentice should have access to support with teaching and learning, help with behaviour management, and a designated Welfare Officer to support day to day issues and provide pastoral care.

The aim of the Junior Apprenticeship is to make the learner employable or ready to progress onto a higher level vocational course or apprenticeship at the age of 16.

The Junior Apprenticeship Programme is primarily funded by the Local Authority and therefore it is essential that agreement is reached between the LA and the College before this provision is agreed.

### **PREPARATION TO APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME / ENHANCED PROGRAMMES**

A scheme for young people aged 16-19, allowing them to gain foundational skills and help them to progress into employment and onto a high quality apprenticeship. This is an employer-led programme.

Enhanced Programmes are available at levels 2 and 3 in three Subject Sector areas; Engineering, Construction and Information Technology. The main aim of Enhanced programmes is to prepare participants for entry into employment via the Apprenticeship Programme where they will work towards an Apprenticeship framework.

Enhanced Programmes increase the standard number of hours of learning delivery by Further Education Institutions (FEIs) from a minimum of 16 hours per week up to a maximum of 30 hours per week to cover a set curriculum to meet the needs of employers; deliver qualifications to learners that will meet identified employer needs within the region; and utilise direct employer engagement through the work placement element of the learning programmes.

Each of the Enhanced Programmes has a separate specification, comprising entry requirements, which has been issued to providers. Further copies are available on request from [post16planningandfunding@gov.wales](mailto:post16planningandfunding@gov.wales)



## **ANNEX D: Public Services Staff Commission paper – “Principles and guidance to support joint workforce planning in public services in Wales**

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The Public Services Staff Commission published a paper in July 2017 on principles and guidance to support joint workforce planning.

The document was developed in conjunction with members of the Workforce Planning and Mobility subgroup of the Workforce Partnership Council (the WPM subgroup).

Its aim is to achieve greater consistency in the outcomes of workforce planning undertaken by individual organisations. It is hoped this would then improve co-ordination and greater consistency in workforce planning arrangements in public services in Wales, and allow for the sharing of workforce training development and delivery costs.

Details of the background to and copy of, the guidance can be accessed via the attached link.

<http://publicservicesstaffcommission.gov.wales/guidance-and-reports/principles-guidance-support-joint-workforce-planning-public-services-in-wales?lang=en>