

SUPPORTING YOUR APPRENTICE'S JOURNEY

Whether you have recruited a new colleague or are upskilling an existing one, this is where all of your planning gets put into action.

There are three parties involved in an apprenticeship:

- Training Provider
- Employer/Line Manager
- The Apprentice

Training Provider

The provider delivers the learning interventions, with the ultimate aim of preparing the apprentice for the End Point Assessment. The learning interventions will vary depending on the apprenticeship standard being delivered. However, any staff assigned to the apprentice will act as a coach, supporting them with their learning; providing advice and guidance; and communicating with them and you as employer/line manager to ensure the apprentice remains on track with their learning plan.

Employer/Line Manager

In some organisations, the duties listed below may be split out across HR or Learning & Development teams, and in others it could be the owner/general manager. In this instance, we have combined the duties into one team.

This includes duties such as:

- Providing support and guidance during the learning journey, following the structure of the apprenticeship. This includes robust induction and performance reviews
- Set clear expectations and achievable goals and targets to support the learning plan
- Work with different departments as required to support the achievement of the learning plan
- Monitor progress of the apprentice, and engage in regular reviews with the apprentice and the Training Provider
- Encourage regular communications between the Line Manager, Apprentice and Training Provider
- Report any issues or concerns to HR, L&D, Line Manager or Training Provider
- Celebrate any successes either internally or externally through social media, website etc. This not only further promotes the benefits of apprenticeships, but will also boost the self-confidence of the Apprentice and their Line Manager

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As well as the general duties of being an Employer/Line Manager; you will need to act as a mentor to the apprentice. If you are new to mentoring, there are many websites offering hints and tips, but a brief overview is below.

When selecting the mentor, the following should be taken into consideration.

The mentor should be:

- A Line Manager or Supervisor
- Qualified or experienced within the sector of the selected apprenticeship
- A good communicator
- Patient
- Able to allocate time to support the apprentice
- Able to attend progress reviews between the apprentice and provider
- Able to facilitate workplace learning in line with the apprentice's development plan

Mentoring is using your own experiences to help guide and support the Apprentice to realise their own potential. Together you will work towards a set of defined objectives with a view to the Apprentice (mentee) grow their skills, personal development and confidence.

You should:

Listen: be a sounding board for ideas and problems

Constructively criticize: identify areas for improvement, focusing on the mentee's behaviours and attitude but never their character

Support and facilitate: share knowledge and contacts - networking is a great opportunity for learning

Lead/Teach by example: remember you are a role model for the mentee so your words, actions, attitudes and behaviour all matter greatly

Promote independence: support them to move to the next step, reflecting on lessons learned to move beyond their comfort zone once again to always move forward

Promote balance: serve as a model for balance between personal and professional needs and obligations. Think "work life balance"

Promote success: take pride in their achievements, knowing you helped them get there

You should not:

Protect from experience: you are not the problem solver; you guide them towards finding the solution

Take over: do not do the work for them

Force: do not box them into one option or to only follow one direction

Use undue influence: don't make the Apprentice feel obliged to follow your influence over their professional decisions

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Lose critical oversight: your relationship must remain professional and you should not allow friendship to turn into favouritism

Condemn: everyone makes a mistake. Do not make the Apprentice feel that genuine mistakes will be the disaster that ends their career.

A good line manager will naturally undertake all of these activities with their colleagues, however the above is in the context of an apprenticeship.

Apprentice

The Apprentice must follow the apprenticeship structure as agreed with the Training Provider and Employer/Line Manager; whilst completing their studying and off-the-job training. They must also put into practice all learning, and work towards their objectives. Across the apprenticeship, all apprentices are required to create a portfolio of evidence (the tool to do this is generally provided by the training provider). This is an important document as it enables an apprentice to evidence their growth when sitting their End Point Assessment.

The training provider will provide specific guidance to each apprentice on their requirements

Please see the Apprentice Toolkit – The Apprenticeship Journey for further information.

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