

AHP Support Workforce Apprenticeships Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes which are designed to help employers train people for specific job roles. At the same time, apprentices get a paying job with valuable training while they work towards a nationally recognised apprenticeship standard or framework.

Who can do an apprenticeship?

Anyone in England aged 16 years old and above, whether employed, unemployed or leaving school, can do an apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit however where there is a statutory or professional body requirement for people in a particular role to be aged 18 or over, a minimum age limit would apply.

What is 20% off the job?

Apprentices must also spend 20% of their time engaged in off-the-job learning. The off-the-job learning must take place within the apprentices normal contracted hours.

Who pays for the apprentice's salary?

Employers pay the salary of the apprentices, and the government pays for the training and assessment. The amount of government funding varies depending on whether the employer is a levy payer or non-levy payer. Details can be seen [here](#)

Can I use apprenticeship levy funding to pay for my apprentice's salary?

Apprenticeship levy, reservations and transfers do not cover salary costs so your organisation will need to fund the apprentice's salary.

Can I recruit part time apprentices?

Yes, the apprenticeship scheme can be undertaken on a part time basis if this is offered by the employer. If an apprentice works less than full time, the apprenticeship duration will be extended accordingly

How can I access apprenticeship funding?

All employers with a pay bill of over £3 million each year pay the apprenticeship levy and the levy can only be spent on apprenticeship training. Your organisation's apprenticeship lead, who normally works within the training or HR departments, will be able to help you access the apprenticeship levy and start apprentices on programmes.

My organisation doesn't pay the apprenticeship levy, how can I access funding?

If an organisation does not pay the apprenticeship levy it can still access government funding for apprenticeships. It can either:

1. Reserve government co-investment: organisations can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%.
2. Levy Transfers: levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship.

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Who decides which profession specific level 5 apprenticeships are necessary?

This is a collective decision between HEE, Professional bodies, and employers, based on the need and feasibility of delivery of the programme, and will be based on a demand assessment taking place across England.

Will staff who are already undertaking the Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker or Level 5 – Apprenticeship be at a disadvantage?

Apprentices who are currently on, or have completed, the L3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker or L5 Assistant Practitioner apprenticeship will achieve the same the apprenticeship standard and receive the same occupational competence as someone else who may undergo the future mapped programmes. However, current apprenticeships won't be mapped to the competency framework or and may not be mapped to relevant profession standards or frameworks.

We cannot yet confirm how long it will take us to develop the mapped programmes with the procured providers and we would **not** advise preventing anyone from starting their apprenticeship as this could delay their progression.

We will also be considering the options for those apprentices who will have completed the L3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker or L5 Assistant Practitioner apprenticeships already and how we can support employers to use the competency framework for these staff, so they are not disadvantaged in any way.

How can sustainability be ensured? This needs to be education and training that is reliably available for many years as part of a recruitment and retention plan?

Apprenticeships help to provide sustainable education provision. Sustainable provision will be secured via the procurement process and will be based on employer need. Innovative delivery, flexible entry criteria, learning methods and access to education, will help employers accommodate more apprentices.

When apprenticeship providers are approved, how can we as employers be assured that they will be meeting local delivery needs?

Part of the procurement process includes consultation on employer needs in the delivery and provision of the apprenticeships.

What does this mean for providers who are already on procurement frameworks or approved procure lists for the Level 3 SHCSW and Level 5 AP? Will they be required to re-tender?

The current framework only covers basic criteria for providers to be accepted – therefore this is a “higher level” procurement requiring more detail from providers and may have fewer providers selected as an output. Employers will naturally tend to gravitate toward the more in-depth procurement, so any providers delivering (or planning to deliver) a more tailored programme should respond to this opportunity. Any previous regional SHCSW procurements will be retired so those providers should respond to this opportunity.

How will employers be able to access the apprenticeships if they can only support small numbers of staff to complete the apprenticeship?

We will be aiming to secure sustainable apprenticeship provision nationally which will include apprenticeship providers who are able to provide flexible learning options which will enable

apprentices to join programmes regardless of geographical constraints and support employers who are unable to support large numbers of starts.

Once the apprenticeships have been procured, as employers / systems will we need to work collaboratively to create a viable cohort. If numbers are not sufficient, how can we ensure access to a programme?

We will be aiming to secure sustainable apprenticeship provision nationally which will include apprenticeship providers who are able to provide flexible learning options which will enable apprentices to join programmes regardless of geographical constraints and support employers who are unable to support large numbers of starts.

Will the Universities accept Level 3 and Level 5 apprenticeships as entry requirements to the Level 6 degree apprenticeships?

Apprenticeship entry requirements do differ by University, however, Salisbury write flexible entry into degree level procurements, and emphasis on this will be increasing in line with Social Value tendering so there will be an increased requirement for universities to assist with widening participation through recognising prior learning.

What does APEL and RPL stand for?

Funds must not be used to pay for training for knowledge, skills, and behaviours already attained by the apprentice, therefore apprenticeship providers must account for prior learning and experience necessary to achieve occupational competence. The apprenticeship provider must thoroughly assess the apprentice's existing knowledge, skills and behaviours against those required to achieve occupational competence. This process is called recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is the process where learners apply for their previous learning, which has not already been assessed and awarded credit by an academic or professional organisation, to be awarded a credit value.

For those staff who do not have the required entry criteria, such as UCAS points, to undertake a pre-registration apprenticeship, what are the options without having to complete a Level 3, then Level 5 and then Level 6 apprenticeship?

They would not necessarily need to do a Level 3 and Level 5 – in theory either may allow them to apply for a Level 6 apprenticeship, depending on the entry criteria adopted by the University. It would depend on what qualifications they did have and their experience. If they had no formal qualifications, then they should really be encouraged to study on the appropriate apprenticeship with support. This piece of work aims to allow APEL from the Level 5 into the Level 6 by securing specialised Level 5 apprenticeship provision.

Do Assistant Practitioners who already have a Foundation Degree have to do a bridging course to access the Radiography degree apprenticeships?

It very much depends on the content of the AP programme / foundation degree, and the different module content and how these align to the professional competencies of the degree apprenticeship. In most cases the content of the AP apprenticeship / foundation degree will allow seamless access to degree study. There are some universities who require a bridging course. Please talk to your university about their specific entry criteria.

How long are the apprenticeships?

You can access the details of all apprenticeship standards using [this link](#).

Do the apprenticeships replace the care certificate?

No, staff are still required to undertake the Care Certificate.

Which routes are available in the Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker Apprenticeship?

There are 5 routes available in the Level 3 SHCSW apprenticeship. The apprenticeship standard and information on routes is available at:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/senior-healthcare-support-worker-v1-2>

You can also find lots of useful information about apprenticeships on our website, where you will find a wide range of apprenticeships, case studies, resources and all the latest apprenticeship news - <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>

The number of apprenticeships emerging are confusing for some staff (unless you work specifically with apprenticeships). Is there a mapping exercise being done outlining the different apprenticeships / levels / responsibilities at each level for clarity both for staff and for workforce planning? Or should we start to do this locally?

All apprenticeships are available using [this link](#).

There is a useful pathway tool on [HASO](#) which can help to consider development through apprenticeships and options available.

Are there any plans for the Level 5 to have an integrated end point assessment to avoid issues with apprentices not completing the apprenticeship once they have achieved their diploma / Foundation Degree?

During 2021, the Trailblazer revised the apprenticeship standard, creating an Integrated Foundation Degree Apprenticeship for Assistant Practitioner. This means that the end-point assessment is integrated into the Foundation Degree and the HEI becomes the provider and end-point assessment organisation. Only HEIs will be able to offer the Integrated Foundation Degree Apprenticeship for Assistant Practitioner.

How can we support staff to achieve Functional Skills before they start an apprenticeship?

Information is available on [HASO](#) about [Skills for Life](#) and the free online learning tools available via [bksb](#).

Does the phrase 'alternative to university path' suggest a lower level output?

No, any Higher / Degree apprenticeships are still a degree route for professional registration awarded by a University.

Is there a plan to link level 3 apprenticeships with T levels to create a clear career pathway for school leavers?

T-levels are an alternative to A levels, apprenticeships and other 16 to 19 courses. Equivalent to 3 A levels, a T Level focuses on vocational skills and can help students into skilled employment, higher study or apprenticeships. Work is underway to ensure that T-levels do provide progression into apprenticeships at appropriate points. Options available are to progress to a relevant apprenticeship at level 4 or higher or to more to an apprenticeship at the same or lower level if the apprenticeship allows the individual to acquire substantive new skills.

Further information is available using [this link](#).

How do apprenticeships fit with the higher development award?

The Higher Development Award is suitable for those unable to access apprenticeships or who are not ready to undertake an apprenticeship. The programme is suitable for clinical and non-

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clinical support staff and focuses on personal development and is not based on clinical elements. Further information about the award and how it fits with apprenticeships is available on the following links:

- [HEE](#)
- NHS Employers [Higher Development Award | NHS Employers](#)

HASO [Higher Development Award - HASO \(skillsforhealth.org.uk\)](#)

Is level 3 meant for band 2/3's and then the Level 5 for band 4's?

No, AfC bands do not specifically link to apprenticeship level.

Is there a future intention to roll out to Radiography Assistants?

HEE is working with the Society of Radiographers to ensure that the contribution of support staff in diagnostic radiography services is maximised. Central to this is defining clear roles and responsibilities and ensuring staff have access to relevant education. For band 2 staff this is likely to be the L2HCS apprenticeship and for Assistant Practitioners the L5 apprenticeship. It is recognised that the therapy pathway on the L3SHCSW apprenticeship does not meet the needs of band 3 Radiography support staff. If the current review of apprenticeship standards do not address this gap, we will work with the Society of Radiographers and the profession to explore other solutions.

Details of the strategy can be found here: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/enable-workforce/developing-role-ahp-support-workers/diagnostic-radiography-support-workers>

What Orthoptic Apprenticeships are available?

You can access the details of all apprenticeship standards using [this link](#).

- Optical Assistant, Level 2 Apprenticeship Standard - details available using [this link](#).

Will there any options of funding available for backfill costs to support employers?

Employer support funding is not currently available for the Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker or Level 5 Assistant Practitioner apprenticeships.

Do you have any guidance for managers to direct staff to level 3 or 5 apprenticeship?

The recently published [AHP Support Workforce Competency Framework](#) will help address this once published in October.

Was an OTA social care role (adult and children) profile obtained to support competency framework development?

Whilst the Framework is focused on staff employed in the NHS, it does reflect the fact that AHPs such as OTAs work across agencies and settings. In developing the Framework HEE worked closely with the RCOT to ensure that it was relevant to OTAs working in social care and supported the College's own competency standards

Should existing vacancies be converted into apprenticeship positions that align with the proposed apprenticeships, or standalone apprenticeship positions be created?

It is employer choice regarding the how apprenticeship opportunities and positions are made available. It is recommended that you contact your organisation's apprenticeship lead for support and to find out about any internal policies which may cover this.

Should existing vacancies be converted into these positions that align with the proposed apprenticeships, or that standalone apprentice positions are created?

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It is employer choice as to how organisations create opportunities for new or current staff to undertake an apprenticeship.

Is there an expectation that the employer would negotiate a salary for existing staff that take up apprenticeships?

It is employer choice regarding the salary of apprentices in an organisation. It is recommended that you contact your organisation's apprenticeship lead for support and to find out about any internal policies which may cover this.

Is there an expectation that some placements will be needed in social care?

There is no requirement for the Level 3 apprenticeship or the Level 5 apprenticeship to undertake placements as part of the programme.

Resources

Work so far on the AHP support workforce is available via this link: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/enable-workforce/developing-role-ahp-support-workers>

This is a really useful guide to levels of qualification/education: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

This is the link to the theatre support route: (SHCSW)

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/senior-healthcare-support-worker-v1-2>

The AHP area of the HEE website is available here: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions>