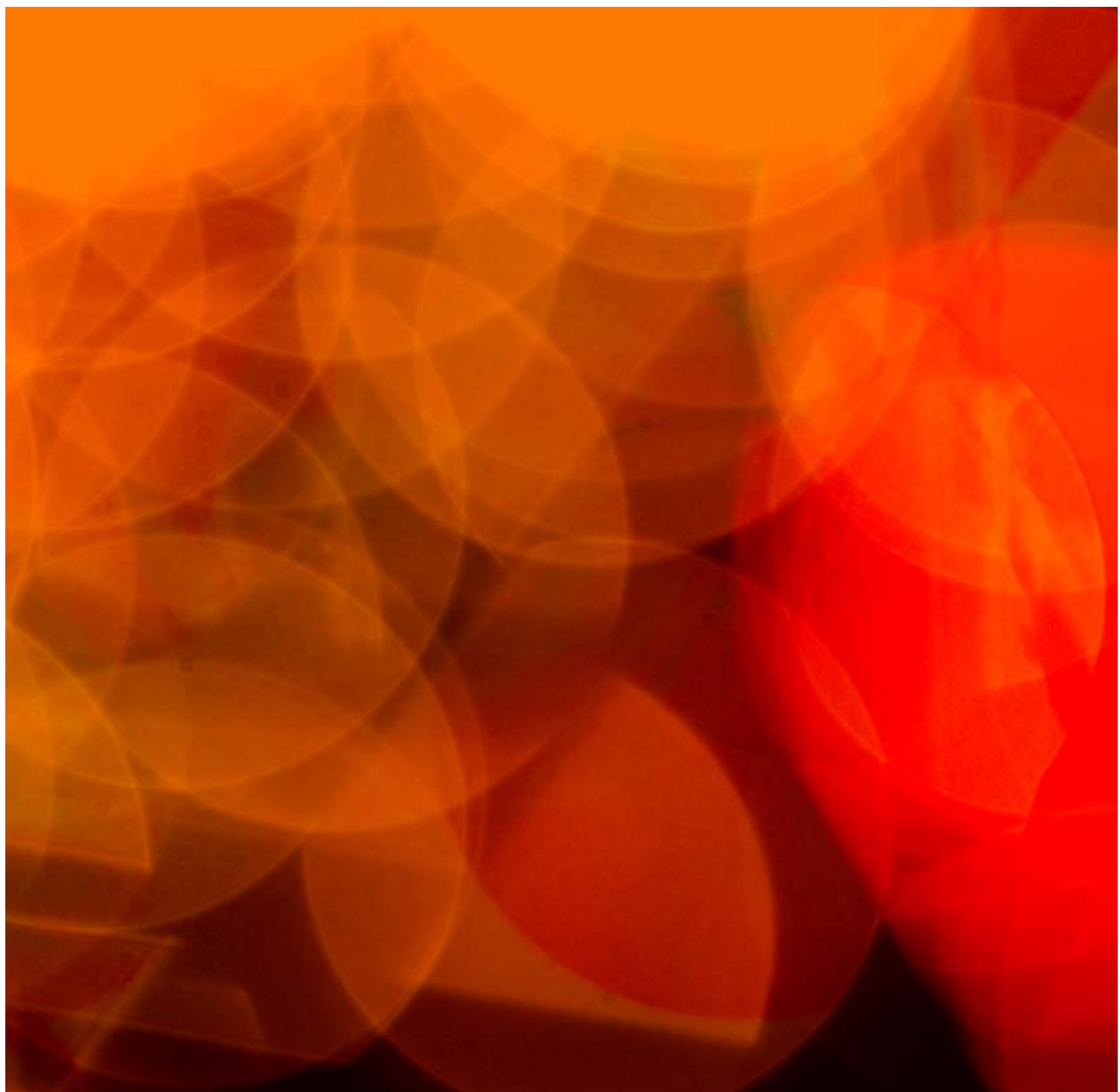


Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs)

A guide to working with host employers



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This publication has been produced as the result of early work with the pilot ATA/GTAs that were established by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and work is ongoing as of April 2010.

Purpose of the guide

This guide provides information and guidance on how you can successfully attract, work with and support employers taking on an apprentice under the newly developed Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) model of delivery. All examples included in this guide have been developed in partnership with the newly appointed ATAs and Group Training Associations (GTAs) supported through the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).

The guide is intended for organisations, including providers and other sector bodies, that are investigating this delivery model as this is a new way of working that may be unfamiliar to many of these organisations,

Throughout this guide, the symbols < > are used to indicate that your own details need to be inserted. Where figures are suggested, they are simply indicative and you should insert the appropriate numbers in relation to your own organisation.

Further guides are available to specifically address:

- supporting employed apprentices;
- managing partners and providers; and
- a guide to setting up an ATA model.

Disclaimer

All information contained in this guide is for reference only and does not constitute definitive guidance. The contents have been developed from initial support work with ATA/GTAs engaged in the LSIS World Class Skills – developing responsive provision (WCS) programme. Each ATA/GTA retains full responsibility for the use, adaptation and adoption of any of the materials contained within this document. All ATA/GTAs should seek advice and guidance from their NAS national or regional links before using, adapting or adopting any of the materials contained in this guide.

Glossary of terms

There are a wide variety of terms used by ATA/GTAs to describe staff roles and functions. You may use different titles in your organisation but are likely to employ staff to fulfil the roles described below. In this guidance the following terms are used.

Apprentice Co-ordinator: staff that recruit, select and match apprentice candidates to job vacancies. They manage the ongoing client relationship with the (host) employer and provide the mentoring support to apprentices.

Business Development Manager: staff that market to employers, secure terms and conditions of employer engagement and negotiate all fees related to hiring an apprentice.

Training Provider: is the organisation that will take responsibility for initial assessments, NVQs, technical certificates and key skills/functional skills training. They will manage the delivery of the Apprenticeship framework to completion. They will manage the delivery of the Apprenticeship framework to completion. They are responsible for completing the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and for working with the (host) employer to provide any assessment and verification of the apprentices' progress, obtaining employer sign off of the periodic reviews towards completion.

Host Employer(s): the term used to describe the employer offering the work placement to the apprentice.

Apprentice: The young person who is employed by you but is placed with a host employer(s) for the duration of their Apprenticeship programme.

Background to the guide

NAS has been established to drive forward the Government's ambition to bring significant growth to Apprenticeships. Recognising that innovative approaches need to be adopted to increase employer engagement and up-skill the workforce during the economic downturn, in June 2009, NAS invited applications from interested organizations to either extend the number of GTAs or to establish ATAs in England. The successful pilots were announced in a Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) press release on 21st October 2009. This press release is available at the following link

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/Press-and-Media/~media/Documents/Press%20Releases/GTA-press-release-211009.ashx>

The guide has been developed following consultancy support with the successful NAS ATA/GTA pilots provided through the LSIS WCS programme. NAS have supported these pilots and have been involved throughout the period of the consultancy support.

There are compelling reasons to develop a flexible approach to Apprenticeship delivery and the ATA model offers the potential to develop strong links with employers to benefit apprentices. An explanation of the characteristics of ATAs and GTAs follows:

- **Apprenticeship Training Agencies:** ATAs are apprentice recruitment agencies. They seek out employers to 'hire out' apprentices to. The ATA assumes the responsibilities of an employer and ensures the apprentice gets paid and receives appropriate on-the-job training. The formal training and assessment is delivered by a training provider(s) with an existing Apprenticeship contract.
- **Group Training Associations:** The key characteristics of GTAs are that they are existing groupings of employers. They have strong and integral employer engagement, high quality flexible provision and deliver a wide range of integrated skills solutions in partnership with their member employers. There is an existing network of GTAs represented by GTA England covering a number of industry sectors. NAS will build on this footprint to extend the benefit to a wider range of sectors and geographical areas. Generally GTAs do not directly employ apprentices but provide the organization and support for Apprenticeship delivery.

Under the WCS programme newly appointed ATA/GTAs were offered tailored support to develop further their:

- strategy and planning arrangements;
- governance arrangements and structure;
- communication with learners, employers and delivery partners;
- delivery and monitoring of progress of learners and partners; and
- quality Assurance arrangements.

There is no single model of delivery. Each ATA/GTA will need to consider various options depending on geographical location, sectors covered and whether they use partner organizations to deliver learning.

Some examples of current models

This is not an exhaustive list and other models are emerging.

Example A – A large regional college has established a regional offer of selected Apprenticeship programmes. Identification, recruitment, employment and delivery of learning will be undertaken by the ATA. No partners are required in this model.

Example B – A national organization is offering specific sector programmes across all LSC regions. Twelve delivery partners have been identified and have supported the ATA in developing pastoral processes for the apprentice. Employers and learners will be engaged through the ATA and details forwarded to the delivery partner, who will undertake recruitment and host employer selection on behalf of the ATA.

Example C – A large regional college has established a provider network with its partner delivery providers; collectively they establish, deliver and monitor learning. Providers are engaged when suitable learners and host employers are identified. The lead organization has information on their provider network in terms of what can be delivered.

Example D – A national provider has joined up with a partner organization and together they form the ATA. Initially, they will operate regionally as they establish their processes and build momentum – eventually making the offer and delivery national.

Example E – An existing GTA wishes to develop its range of services and has set up an ATA. Apprentices' training requirements will be met by training providers who are members of the GTA. The GTA will focus on employers who are members of the GTA. Later they will seek to expand the numbers of employers and training providers who are part of the GTA.

Engaging with host employers

The pilot projects have demonstrated that the ATA models have some clear benefits for an employer, particularly small employers. These benefits include:

- the employer receives support to identify, scope and recruit to vacancies;
- the employer is relieved of the burden of additional payroll activities;
- the employer can use apprentices for short term projects;
- the employer can use apprentices to cope with seasonal variations and still provide a valuable experience in the workplace;
- the employer has access to appropriate candidates who have been preselected for the job roles;
- the employer gets support to deal with staff issues related to the apprentice;
- the employer can appraise an apprentice's performance prior to offering them full time employment;
- the employer has the flexibility to change an apprentice or cease using them to cope with the demands of business.

Getting your marketing message right is vital to protect the reputation of the ATA delivery model. You will need to consider how the message is communicated to employers. Messages need to be clear and direct. Be sure you do not raise employers' expectations beyond the

service that you can provide. It is important that employers that are able to offer a fully employed Apprenticeship do not use the ATA model as a substitute. This would be regarded as displacing an existing Apprenticeship opportunity and is to be avoided at all costs.

However, it is important to promote the benefits of the ATA/GTA model to employers that otherwise would not engage in Apprenticeship provision.

Which employers should we promote our offer to?

Promotional literature, flyers, leaflets etc, should be targeted. Suggested targets include:

- employers which you have worked with previously, but that have not employed a young person / apprentice into a position for a minimum of <12/18/24> months;
- employers who already have apprentices but may be able to offer additional Apprenticeships using the ATA. Be careful not to displace what would have ordinarily been a fully employed Apprenticeship opportunity;
- you could work with your partner providers to ask them to identify their employers which have not been engaged in Apprenticeship delivery for <12/18/24> months and ask the providers to promote the ATA model on your behalf;
- sector and trade groupings of employers, e.g. Federation of Small Businesses.

You should include full details of the programme on your website. Work with the local press to celebrate your successes publicly e.g. to publicise the launch of your ATA or to celebrate learner achievement. Host employers will appreciate the positive press coverage and it may attract other employers. You may want to use the support that you offer to host employers as your unique selling point this will help you to stand out as a viable option for the employer to consider.

Capturing host employer information

Promoting the programme will hopefully result in a great number of leads for you to consider, and you will need to:

- capture the employer information accurately;
- ensure that vacancies are of sufficient detail to enable them to be matched to any suitable young person and so that they can be entered on to the Apprenticeship vacancy matching service available at:
<https://apprenticeshipvacancymatchingservice.lsc.gov.uk/navms/forms/candidate/Apprenticeships.aspx>.
- be able to recognise that employers have registered their details against the ATA programme (particularly if you have employers that you work with under different arrangements such as Train to Gain or Apprenticeships).

You may need to update, amend or purchase a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

A comprehensive CRM system could be a great help in making your ATA a success. However it is worth setting out some clear objectives for CRM before introducing a system.

If your ATA is to make a success of its CRM implementation it is important that your senior management backs the process and that a key member of your team is nominated as a CRM champion and drives the process.

A whole range of resources on implementing CRM systems effectively is available on the WCS website available at: wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk.

Choosing your host employers

It is advisable to develop transparent criteria for selecting host employers to work with. This will help manage both your financial risk, and the reputation of the ATA model. You should consider:

- running a financial credit check on the host employer (a small fee will be involved);
- setting a minimum period of placement at <4/6/8/12> weeks;
- avoid employers who are not committed to a placement that has value as a training experience. They may be seeking temporary staff purely to cope with very short term business pressures or seasonal demand;
- setting a limit as to how many apprentices a host employer can offer work placements consecutively, without progressing learners into full employment (exceptions could be made for high quality placements with a freeze on Full time Equivalent staff, (FTE's)/headcount); and
- the range of on the job experiences available to apprentices.

Formal arrangements with host employers

Once host employers have been engaged, it is essential that formal contracting arrangements are put in place to ensure that the host employer:

- is fully committed to supporting the learning programme and any off the job training;
- understands their responsibility for supervising the apprentice on a day to day basis;
- is clear about the salary and payment arrangements;
- is aware of their health and safety obligations to the apprentice;
- understands their responsibility in terms of managing the performance of the apprentice;
- is aware of the insurance requirements and confirms that these are in place;
- understands how to deal with sickness and absence of the apprentice; and
- understands how to terminate arrangements with either the ATA/GTA or the apprentice.

Appendix A shows an example of a contract with an employer. It is only produced for guidance and should not be used directly without being reviewed and agreed by your legal adviser(s).

If you choose to use the example provided without legal guidance, you do so at your own risk. LSIS, WCS and KPMG will bear no legal responsibility.

Additional guidance and support for host employers

Some employers, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that are not experienced in Apprenticeship provision, are likely to be less familiar with working with and supporting a young person in the workplace. In such cases, it is worth providing additional guidance above and beyond the formal arrangements identified in section 6. This could include information on:

- workplace supervision;
- getting the best from a young person;
- how and when to recognise progression and achievement; and
- policy development e.g. Health and safety in the workplace.

Appendix B is an example of the additional guidance given to employers by an ATA regarding workplace supervision and how to get the best from a young person.

Policy Development Support

Many employers, particularly small employers may not have developed their own policies. As an ATA you may be able to assist them to develop these. The key policies that you need to look for are:

- health and Safety;
- equality and Diversity;
- safeguarding of young people (This is important as you may be placing 16 and 17 year olds).

Developing these policies with employers may also assist them in considering taking on additional apprentices.

Further Information on ATAs

The following ATA guides can be accessed at <http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk/resources#ATA%20Guides>:

- supporting employed apprentices;
- managing partners and providers; and
- a guide to setting up an ATA model.

For further information on ATAs not covered by these guides and the NAS ATA/GTA pilot projects, please contact martin.ward@apprenticeships.gov.uk.

Appendix A – Example Employer Handbook

To assist host employers to understand their obligations and responsibilities an employer handbook should contain all the relevant information needed. It should always reflect the advice which is given to apprentices. In the example cited here the handbook is part of the contractual arrangements with the host employer. The first page is the very basic contract. The handbook follows.

You may have developed an employer handbook to support other learning programmes, in which case, it would be advisable to develop an addendum which fully incorporates the financial arrangements and pastoral role agreed with the host employer.

Health and Safety is an area with which the host employer should be familiar. If you have a current health and safety agreement which you use with other employers for other programmes, then it would be reasonable to refer to this document within the handbook and to issue the Health and Safety guidance alongside the handbook.

Many of the clauses can be adapted to suit your own terms and conditions. But do make sure you take legal advice to ensure that the contractual terms are legal and reasonable.

Formal Contract for Apprentice Host Employers

This agreement is between <Your Organisation>

And < >

Company

Address

Telephone No

Date of issue

Welcome and congratulations on taking the first step towards recruiting your new apprentice, which we hope will be a rewarding and fulfilling experience for you and your organisation.

This formal agreement (when signed by both parties) sets down the responsibilities of <Your Organisation/ATA> and you <Their organisation> (Referred to as the 'Host Company'). It describes the service we offer to you as one of our host employers and explains what is required of you for the day to day supervision of your new apprentice.

We will employ your apprentice for a maximum of <insert length of contract> or until the Apprenticeship framework is completed (which ever is the soonest). We will arrange for a training organisation to provide the training program(s) as agreed with you.

You, the Host Company, will provide the apprentice with workplace experience so that they can progress towards achieving their vocational qualification.

This formal agreement is based on the following information which you have provided.

Number of Apprenticeship placements offered	
Weekly pay will be (per placements)	
Weekly hours of work	
Duration of placement(s) is (months)	
Desired start date of placement(s)	
When you sign and return this agreement to us, you confirm that you have read and agreed to the terms of this formal agreement and employer handbook, including, financial arrangement; your Health and Safety obligations to the apprentice; the process for dealing with apprentice issues; your agreement to support the apprentices' training process by allowing reasonable study time and how this agreement can be terminated by either party.	
Signed on behalf of employer	
Date	
Signed on behalf of <Your organisation>	
Date	

Employer Handbook

This handbook has been produced to answer any questions you may have about the working and formal arrangement between you and us. The handbook is a formal part of your contract with us. It covers three distinct sections, namely:

- supervision and management of your apprentice;
- your obligations;
- financial arrangements.

Supervision and management of your apprentice

Under the terms of this agreement and the contract of employment held between us and your apprentice(s) you accept the responsibility to support the apprentice for both pastoral and work related issues.

Probation

When your apprentice accepts your offer of a work placement, the apprentice will be on a period of probation for <Insert frequency as per agreed in the learner handbook>

Expenses Policy

Any travel costs incurred by your apprentice to and from work (public transport, parking etc.) cannot be claimed under any additional expenses and are the responsibility of your apprentice.

If, in the course of work, you request that the apprentice go to an offsite location for which the apprentice will incur costs on your behalf (for example, taxis or public transport) you are asked to reimburse the apprentice without undue delay. All expenses incurred should be settled directly between you and the apprentice.

Absence, Sickness, Injury and sick pay

We operate a timesheet system which you and the apprentice sign and return to us <Weekly/fortnightly/monthly>. You will sign each timesheet to confirm that you agree to pay for the hours declared.

Unauthorised absence should be recorded on the timesheet. Any unauthorised time away from work will be deducted from the apprentice wage.

Sickness should also be recorded on the timesheet, and unless indicated by you to the contrary, time recorded as sickness will be deducted from the apprentice wage.

If you are concerned by the attendance behaviour of your apprentice you should contact us on <central contact number> as soon as possible.

If your apprentice is injured while in work, or while performing work duties, it should be recorded in an accident book and you should inform us as soon as possible.

Your apprentice has been instructed that all cases of sickness and absence will be reported to you directly. You should ensure that the apprentice has the details of who to contact and what your absence policy is (for example, is there a specific time of day where absence is reported).

Dismissal, disciplinary and grievance

Under the terms of the contract of employment, the apprentice has been informed that we, as their employer, operate a disciplinary and grievance procedure. They have also been instructed that the following actions or behaviours may result in a discipline or dismissal procedure:

- **arriving at work under the influence of drugs or alcohol or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs during work hours;**
- **being abusive at work or disobeying any reasonable instruction of your host employer;**
- **being absent from work without explanation or if you are regularly late for work;**
- **disclosing confidential information;**
- **being involved in unlawful or criminal activities;**
- **all of the above rules also apply while attending training activities.**

Should you suspect any of the above, you should contact us immediately, or in the case of gross misconduct where you need to remove the apprentice from the premises, please contact us without delay.

Annual and Bank Holidays

Apprentices are entitled to be paid for 4 weeks holiday per year (accrued as 1.5 days per month worked). All holiday requests will be made by the apprentice to you, their host employer. Apprentices should not take paid holiday leave before it has been accrued. You will not be invoiced for holidays taken by the apprentice as holiday payments are included in our regular invoice to you.

In addition to paid holidays, apprentices are entitled to eight public bank holidays per year. We calculate our holiday year based on <a set annual start date / as an anniversary of the start date>.

Overtime

Our contract of employment with the apprentice and our formal agreement with you is based on an agreed number of working hours per week. If you require your apprentice to work additional hours to those agreed, you should make these arrangements between you both. Apprentices have been advised that additional hours which have been worked with agreement from you will be paid as overtime.

Payments for any overtime should be made <directly to the learner / identified through the timesheet and invoiced through normal arrangements / other arrangement >

Supervision

You will appoint an appropriate supervisor who the apprentice will report to and who will assist the learner with evidence gathering to support their learning programme (where appropriate) and will confirm the apprentice timesheet submission as being accurate and correct.

Training support

Under the terms of our contract of employment, your apprentice is entitled to time off for study as agreed with you. We will arrange for a training provider to deliver a learning programme to your apprentice and you are required to allow access to the training provider for the purposes of learner assessment and or learner review. You are also required to allow access to the apprentice co-ordinator, employed by us, who may need to enter your premises to conduct business with your apprentice.

Your Obligations

Health and Safety

For Health and Safety (H&S) purposes, your apprentice is protected and should be treated in the same way as any of your employees.

<If you already have a H&S handbook, refer to it here and issue as a separate document>

Timesheets

Timesheets are the catalyst by which your apprentice will be paid. Our payroll for your apprentice runs <weekly/fortnightly/monthly> and as a result, timesheets must be returned to us by <set a deadline, eg, Tuesday morning at 11.am – and a how to send i.e. email address, post, fax> to ensure your apprentice is paid on time. Any timesheets submitted late, or submitted incorrectly completed, or which is unsigned by you may cause delay in wages being processed. <An example timesheet could be attached as an annex>

Financial Arrangements

Our Fees and Invoicing arrangements

You are contractually obliged to pay our invoice on presentation. You will be invoiced <frequency weekly/fortnightly/monthly> and this will represent <this could be one/two weeks in arrears and one/two weeks in advance>.

Your invoice will be made up of;

- the agreed weekly rate paid to the apprentice;
- a xx% uplift to cover holidays and bank holidays;
- a xx% uplift to cover Personal Protective Equipment (where appropriate);

- a xx% service charge for our services;
- VAT at the prevailing rate.

Delays in settling our invoice may result in your apprentice being removed from your workplace with immediate effect. We will remove your apprentice immediately should you fail to settle <two> consecutive invoices.

Employing your apprentice directly

We would encourage you, as an employer, to offer your apprentice a direct contract of employment at the end of the Apprenticeship programme. If you feel that you are able to offer a contract of employment earlier then we will relinquish our contract of employment, however we reserve the right to charge a fee of £xxxx to cover our costs.

Introductory fee

If you decide to employ a candidate which we have submitted to you for selection at the stage of interview, we reserve the right to charge a fee of £xxx to cover our costs.

Payment arrangements

We require you to pay us by direct debit on a <weekly/fortnightly/monthly> basis. Invoices will be sent electronically on a <weekly/monthly> basis. Monthly statements will be sent to you.

Termination of this agreement

We reserve the right to suspend or terminate this agreement and our services to you if you breach the terms and conditions detailed.

You can terminate the agreement at any time prior to accepting an apprentice. Once you have accepted one of our apprentices, you need to give a minimum of <5/10> days notice.

Any outstanding payments will be due to us at the date of termination of this agreement.

Liability clause

We are not liable for any loss, damage, delay or cost incurred by the actions of an apprentice whilst on placement with you

Appendix B – Examples of Additional Guidance for Employers

Workplace Supervision

People learn best when actively involved in their learning, so when teaching an apprentice a new task make sure they know why they are doing things, and why these things are important.

Clear communications

Take time to think about the instructions you give. Write down your instructions or break the job into steps if necessary. To give clear instructions you should:

- assume no prior knowledge;
- explain why the job is done this way;
- use clear and simple language;
- include safe work practices in your instructions;
- ask the apprentice to restate the instructions back to you to check their understanding;
- make sure there are no distractions;
- make use of demonstrations;
- take time to show your apprentice how to do things the correct way. You may find it helps to break the task down into manageable pieces. Observation is a quick and very effective way to learn, it allows you to:
 - show the apprentice correct procedures and sequences;
 - explain why the task is done that way;
 - use correct work practices.
- allow time for the apprentice to practice new skills. Everyone makes mistakes, so expect mistakes. Point the apprentice in the right direction;
- watch and coach and be patient:
 - ask questions to encourage the apprentice to think about the task e.g. *“That’s right Sarah, now what should you do next?”*, or *“If the nut is seized on the bolt, how could you loosen it?”*;
 - give praise when it is due;
 - suggest ways to improve, e.g. *“You’ve mastered the register Jason, now I want you to concentrate on customer service”*;
 - ask questions to check for understanding, e.g. *“What are the four steps in checking the order form?”*;
 - involve the apprentice in decision making, e.g. *“Should we set the guide rails now?”*;
 - obtain information and feedback, e.g. *“How is your training in power tools going? Is there anything you don’t understand?”*

What it means for the apprentice to be competent

Apprenticeships are based on learning and developing skills through a combination of hands on experience and structured training.

An apprentice is competent in our training system when they are able to apply their knowledge and skills to successfully complete work activities in a range of situations and environments, against the standard of performance expected in the workplace and across industry.

Competency includes what are known as employability skills – the ability to support the workplace through communication, team work, problem solving, self-management, planning and organising, technology, learning, and taking initiative.

Being competent means:

- knowing how to do a job;
- understanding workplace policies and procedures;
- fitting in with others in the workplace;
- dealing with everyday problems that may occur;
- understanding why something should be done that way;
- being able to apply skills consistently;
- being able to transfer skills to different situations and;
- being able to do different tasks at the same time.

Lecturing or learning?

Constant lecturing will make your apprentice tune out. Often people learn more when given a chance to try something themselves, even if it means potentially having to learn from a mistake.

What are workplace competencies?

An Apprenticeship is made up of training and assessments to develop a number of competencies – sets of skills and knowledge relevant to the workplace, at the level of performance required to do them satisfactorily at work. For all Apprenticeships the training and assessment outcomes are achieved through assessments and assignments and the completion of actual work in the workplace.

Examples of competencies for someone waiting on tables in the hospitality industry might include:

- providing a link between kitchen and service areas;
- promoting products and services to customers;
- providing a food and beverage service.

Examples of competencies for someone working as a customer service assistant in the retail industry might include:

- working effectively in a retail environment;
- communicating in the workplace;
- applying point of sale handling procedures.

To complete an Apprenticeship and receive a qualification, the apprentice must successfully complete all of the units of competency that make up the NVQ, technical certificate, Employer Rights and Responsibilities (ERR) and Key skills/functional skills (if necessary).